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BARRIERS TO DANCE EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATION INTO THE BELIEFS OF DANCE EDUCATORS AND NON-DANCE FAMILIARS ON DANCE AND ITS PLACE IN THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEM

Brianna Michelle Miller
levy0457@bears.unco.edu

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

BARRIERS TO DANCE EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATION INTO THE BELIEFS OF DANCE EDUCATORS AND NON-DANCE FAMILIARS ON DANCE AND ITS PLACE IN THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEM

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Bri Michelle Miller

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Accepted by the Thesis Committee:

_____

Sandra L. Minton, Ph.D., Chair, Advisor

_____

Christy O'Connell-Black, M.A., Committee Member

Accepted by the Graduate School:

_____

Jeri-Anne Lyons, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Vice President for Research

ABSTRACT

Miller, Bri M. *Barriers to Dance Education: An Exploration into the Beliefs of Dance Educators and Non-Dance Familiars on Dance and Its Place in the Public-School System*. Unpublished Masters of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2021.

The purpose of this study was to investigate differing views on the value of dance and its place within the public-education system. The researcher crafted three research questions to guide her research:

Q1 What barriers or objections exist when it comes to incorporating dance within the public-school setting?

Q2 What discrepancies exist between the viewpoints of dance educators and non-dance familiars when it comes to dance and its value within the public education system?

Q3 What specific steps can be taken to highlight the importance of dance education in the public-school setting?

Nine dance educators and twelve non-dance familiars completed a survey in which they answered questions about their views on various twenty-first century skills and dance's role within the public-school sector. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data indicated that while both participant groups were largely in agreement about the relative importance of the surveyed twenty-first century skills, dance educators and non-dance educators were less unified on their beliefs about which skills could be strengthened through regular participation in dance classes. The findings of this study also highlighted several barriers to the growth of dance in the public-school sector, including funding, lack of understanding of content and benefits by non-dance familiars, educational priorities, and the current structure of public-school dance classes.

Limitations of this study included the small participant pool involved in the study, validation of research instruments, and potential inherent biases held by the participants. Additionally, although the researcher made every effort to conduct this study without bias, it would be important for another researcher or group of researchers to repeat this study in order to verify the current findings.

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In a ballet class, the révérence is the last exercise, used for the dancer to show respect and acknowledgment for all those that led the dancer to this point in their education and career. Rather appropriately, this is the last portion of my thesis to be written, and in the ballet tradition, I wish to acknowledge a number of key people who helped this document become a reality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goal of Thesis

Opportunities to study music and the visual arts can be found in the vast majority of American public schools. Yet, while most students have the opportunity to study music and visual arts in school beginning at a young age, opportunities to study dance within the public-school system are much fewer in number. From the time they are able to stand (and often even before this), children have a natural inclination to move their bodies and dance whenever they hear music. Why then, do we not choose to nurture this instinct towards movement within our school programs, opting instead to focus more heavily on other disciplines in the performing arts field?

According to a 2013 report by the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), regular participation in dance is associated with

> specific, measurable improvements in cognitive, social and personal behaviors, and skills such as motivation, perseverance/task-persistence, focus, ownership of learning, spatial awareness, self-confidence, and cooperative learning/collaboration. ("Evidence"; Bonbright et al. 34)

Dance education allows students to engage with and solve problems in a physical manner, working both independently and as part of a group to expand their knowledge of the self, both in terms of their physical and mental capacities.

> Indications exist that the instrumental use of dance is powerful and long-lasting, despite the fact that the mode used is nonverbal and is seen as an example of far transfer. In fact, it would appear that the evidence of the efficacy of embodied learning is significant and worthy of further investigation. The impact of the programs reviewed on schools and

> teachers is also significant. In schools where dance programs flourish, students' attendance rises, teachers are more satisfied, and the overall sense of community grows. ("Evidence"; Bonbright et al. 34)

Regular participation in dance certainly has a number of benefits, which are physical, mental, and emotional. Still, dance continues to lag behind the other arts fields in terms of prevalence within the public education system. The National Center for Education Statistics noted that in the 2009-2010 school year, ninety-four percent of U.S. public elementary schools offered courses in music, while eighty-three percent of these schools offered classes in the visual arts. However, only four percent of public elementary schools provided instruction designated specifically for theatre or drama, and a mere three percent of public elementary schools offered dance-specific instruction. These numbers only improve slightly when looking at statistics for U.S. public middle and high schools. At this level, ninety-one percent of secondary schools offered music, eighty-nine percent offered visual arts, forty-five percent offered theatre or drama classes, and twelve percent offered dance (Parsad and Spiegelman 11). One cannot help but look at these numbers and wonder why dance is offered in the public-school system so rarely in comparison to the other arts fields.

The objective of this research was to identify the factors that prevent dance from being commonly offered within the public-school setting. Numerous studies have been conducted on the benefits of dance and the ways in which dance can be incorporated into the education system, but studies that look at the specific barriers that affect the limited place dance has in the public-school system are virtually non-existent. One would be hard-pressed to find a dance educator or supporter who feels that advocacy is not crucial for dance to continue to grow as a field of study. Yet, as dance researcher Susan Stinson stated, dance advocacy may be suffering due to biases among researchers who fail to see the flaws in their chosen art field. She wrote,

> Good research, on the other hand, needs skeptics: people who problematize, ask questions, and attempt to uncover flaws in their own thinking as well as that of others. Researchers are ethically bound to look dispassionately, regardless of their own beliefs. (10)

Dance advocates must "…arm [themselves] with the latest research and evidence to support the need for dance in schools [because] this is what matters to government officials and administrators" (McGreevy-Nichols and Provost 83). To this end, it is the belief of the researcher that, only by looking at dance through the eyes of non-dance familiars (in this case, public school administrators and non-dance educators), can one hope to better understand the barriers that prevent dance from being offered regularly among the course offerings of public schools. Understanding the beliefs of non-dance familiars will in turn allow us to begin to better advocate for dance within the public-school setting.

As part of a graduate thesis project, the researcher hoped to inform current and future dance educators, as well as public-school teachers and administrators, on the perceived value and role of dance within the public-school system. Outlining specific discrepancies and barriers surrounding the inclusion of dance among the schools' course offerings would hopefully allow proponents of dance to better understand the viewpoints of non-dance familiars who have a say in their school's course offerings, thus also allowing these proponents to have a clearer conception of the work that needs to be done in order to illuminate the value of dance education in the eyes of non-dance familiars.

The purpose of this study was to investigate differing views on the value of dance and its place within the public-education system. The researcher crafted three research questions to guide her research:

Q1 What barriers or objections exist when it comes to incorporating dance within the public-school setting?

Q2 What discrepancies exist between the viewpoints of dance educators and non-dance familiars when it comes to dance and its value within the public education system?

Q3 What specific steps can be taken to highlight the importance of dance education in the public-school setting?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand participants' thoughts on dance and its potential value in the public-school system. Throughout its history, dance has not had a solidified place within the field of education. Even today, educators continue to debate whether dance should fall under the umbrella of physical education or the performing arts.

> Lack of clarity to these questions continues to promote major misunderstandings at national, state and local levels among our colleagues in the arts and education fields. This confusion causes gross misalignment of curriculum and resources in schools, school districts, and states. Without dedicated alignment, students and teachers suffer. ("Threats"; Bonbright 108)

A further issue can be found in the fact that, as of 2018, although all states have adopted set arts education standards at both the elementary and secondary levels, only forty-four states require arts instruction to be provided by their districts. Furthermore, only seventeen states specify arts education is required in order for schools to be accredited (Education Commission). In other words, although each state has adopted their own set of arts-related standards, there is minimal regulation in terms of arts-related requirements. Even in those states that require arts instruction, there is no standard or guiding structure as to the genre or type of arts classes that must be offered. With this being the case, it is no wonder that dance is an oft-neglected area of study in most public-schools. While there are certainly changes that need to occur at the state and national levels in order to better regulate and advocate for dance education, surveying and interviewing both non-dance familiars in the public-school system and public-school dance

educators allowed the researcher to establish a set of commonly held viewpoints on dance education and its value.

Another purpose of this study was to understand which skills participants believed could be strengthened through regular participation in dance, as well as which skills were deemed most important to student success. In recent years, a set of skills classified as "twenty-first century skills," have risen in popularity in the public eye as being critical to the future success of the upcoming generation of students.

> 21st-century skills, include (1) being accountable, flexible, and personally responsible; (2) using effective oral and written communication; (3) developing creativity and curiosity; (4) using critical thinking and reasoning to make choices; (5) exercising analysis, integration, and evaluation; (6) developing collaborative skills; (7) framing and solving problems; (8) exercising self-direction; and (9) accepting social responsibility. These universal skills are necessary for solving many problems that we as a nation and world face today. Through the Internet and modern modes of transportation humanity is interconnected across time zones, countries, and continents. We can no longer live in isolation, but must use all constructive and positive methods available to solve the world's problems, including skills learned from participating in the arts. (Minton and Hofmeister 67).

Numerous studies have indicated the connection between dance education and the development of twenty-first century skills. A 2017 study by Frichtel indicated dance education allows elementary school children to navigate challenging situations and social expectations while "…learning to work collaboratively and developing social skills necessary to excel in contemporary society," in addition to expanding on collaborative, communicative, and leadership skills (47-50). Minton and Hofmeister described dance education as helping to boost such nonverbal skills as critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence, as well as the ability to analyze and reflect (75). Yet, just because research has illustrated the connection between dance education and a myriad of important life skills, this does not mean that our school administrators and teachers (or even dance educators) are necessarily aware of these benefits.

McGreevy-Nichols and Provost proclaimed that surveys and testimonials are key in allowing dance advocates to "…collect evidence and research data to support, market, and better…." dance offerings in schools across the country (83). To this end, a major part of this study involved presenting participants with a list of skills centered around the commonly-accepted twenty-first century skills. Some of the skills highlighted in this study included critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, leadership, productivity, and social capabilities. One technique used by the researcher was to have participants identify skills from a list they felt could be associated with dance training. Participants were also asked to rank these skills in order of importance to overall student success, as well as to identify specific examples of how these skills might play out within the confines of a dance class.

A third purpose of this study was to compile a list of recommendations that may be made in order to allow dance proponents to better advocate for the inclusion of their art form among public-school offerings. Pinpointing discrepancies between non-dance familiars and dance educators when it came to the identification of skills that can be associated with participating in dance might allow the researcher to highlight a number of specific skills and areas associated with dance that may be commonly misunderstood or under-valued within the education system. Through the presentation of these discrepancies, the researcher hoped to illuminate areas that need to become the focus of dance education advocacy efforts.

Significance of Study

As stated previously, dance is often overlooked in the public-school system. Even when dance is incorporated into a school's curriculum, it is not always taught by a dance-specific teacher. "Only seven percent of [public elementary] schools enlist dance specialists to teach dance; otherwise, dance is taught by physical education teachers" (Carey et al. iii). In order to

begin to better advocate for the inclusion of dance among public-school offerings, we must take the time to fully understand how dance is perceived in the eye of the public.

> It is hard for those of us who believe so strongly in dance education and its value to have the skepticism required for good research. This is partly because we love dance, and partly because our livelihoods depend on convincing others it is important. (Stinson 11).

This study aimed to contribute to the fields of dance advocacy and dance education research by taking the time not only to expand upon and try to convince others of the merits of dance, but also to highlight, in a realistic light, the ways in which non-dance familiars view dance education. Strengthening dance educators' ability to advocate for their craft "…can prepare teacher candidates to survive in a field repeatedly marginalized by educational policy and simultaneously underrepresented among other art forms in K–12 education" (Milling 7). Milling also suggested that conceptual knowledge, or an understanding of the connection between multiple elements within a given structure, is crucial to successful dance advocacy (10).

In line with this suggestion, the researcher aimed to gain knowledge of how the beliefs of public-school administrators and teachers may relate to the prevalence of dance within these schools. By emphasizing the pitfalls that non-dance familiars see in dance and by carefully analyzing variances in the ways that non-dance familiars and dance educators view the study of dance, the researcher aimed to contribute to the field of dance education in a meaningful way. More specifically, it is the researcher's sincere hope that the outcome of this study will help highlight ways in which supporters of dance can better advocate for the regular inclusion of dance within public schools.

NDEO's McGreevy-Nichols and Provost recommended connecting with school leaders, teachers, and government officials to help educate these parties on the importance of dance in the public education system (83). With this in mind, a major goal of this study was to begin a much-

needed dialogue between teachers, administrators, and district officials about the ways in which dance can be incorporated into the public-school system and elevated as an area of study.

> Advocates need not identify an enemy to gain steam for their efforts. They need to learn what is and isn't happening in the arts, and they need to listen to those who oversee the planning and enactment of curricula. As it is in teaching and learning, listening is the advocate's quest. And just as the best teaching happens when we expect the most from our students, the most effective advocacy will happen when we begin with the assumption of mutual caring and proceed with an attitude of respect. (Davis 87)

To this end, the researcher hoped to serve as an advocate for dance education by first serving as a listener. This study aimed to raise crucial points of conversation not only among the participants in this study, but among all those who hope to advocate for the arts and all those who are actively looking to continue to change and revolutionize the field of public education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A large amount of literature regarding dance in public education, barriers to the growth of dance education in the public-school sector, and current dance advocacy efforts provided a basis for this study. As stated previously, the purpose of this study was to investigate differing views on the value of dance and its place within the public-education system. In providing a background with which to frame the previously stated research questions, this chapter offers a discussion of the history of dance and the performing arts in public education, twenty-first century skills and their place in the realm of education, and challenges to the growth of dance education.

Visual and Performing Arts as an Integral Part of Public Education

When thinking of courses that are central to the success of students enrolled in the American public education system, reading and mathematics usually come to mind. After all, these are the two subjects that form the basis of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), an assessment that all-too frequently is used to determine students' intelligence and, consequently, their eligibility for post-secondary education. However, there is another area of education beyond reading, mathematics, and even science that may not immediately come to mind as a factor contributing to overall student intelligence and success— the arts.

A 2011 survey by the U.S. Department of Education showed that a large majority of participants indicated the arts are an essential or very important part of a student's overall

education (Carey et al. 31). There is no doubt the arts hold an important and irreplaceable role in the school system, from their role in both personal creativity and group collaboration, to the life and citizen skills endowed upon those who study the arts. When children are sent to school, the hope is they will gain the tools needed to interpret, question, and positively influence the world around them, which is precisely the sort of understanding an education in the arts affords (Davis 23).

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences and the Arts in Education

Psychologist Howard Gardner defined intelligence as "…an ability to solve problems or fashion products to make something of value that is appreciated in at least one culture." If one takes Gardner's definition to heart, it becomes evident that garnering intelligence can be equated to learning the skills needed to thrive in life as a productive member of one's community (Fowler 40). Gardner argued that there are multiple intelligences: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Furthermore, he stated that no singular intelligence should be regarded as more important than the others, as an individual would need to be proficient across multiple skillsets in order to succeed in life. One of Gardner's isolated intelligences (musical) quite obviously correlates to the arts, yet each type of intelligence "…can be used to create or to understand artistic works, to work with artistic symbol systems, and to create artistic meanings" (Fowler 40).

In short, each form of intelligence can be used to create various forms of art, while studying the arts can also help strengthen the intelligences. Dance requires its students to summon and build upon their kinesthetic, spatial, and musical intelligence as the students learn to control their bodily movements and inhabitation of space within the room, often syncing their movements with music. Visual arts students must rely on logical-mathematical intelligence as

they plan and execute a piece of work, making distinct choices as to various shapes, angles, and colors to include in a work; the coherency and effectiveness of a visual artist's work will therefore be a direct result of their ability to use logic and complex mathematical principles to best appeal to their audience. Of course, studying the dramatic arts requires students to hone in on their linguistic intelligence as they learn and execute their lines, while both interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences allow the young actor to develop and bring their character to life upon the stage. Of course, the arts are not the only area of study to allow students to build upon their intelligences, but they do provide some of the most interactive and engaging means by which students can build upon these various intelligences.

According to Elliot Eisner, a school's curriculum should aim to optimize each individual student's potential by working to strengthen the various intelligences possessed by the student (Fowler 42). This effort is extremely important in ensuring that each student is able to reach his or her utmost potential by providing an equitable education. Each student comes to school with his or her own unique set of skills, and each student will need to be instructed in a slightly different way to ensure he or she is able to maximize their innate skillset. With this said, the arts offer the means to diversify education in a way that enhances equitable learning opportunities.

*Benefits of Arts in Education***.**

The benefits of an education in the visual and performing arts are plentiful and have been expounded upon by numerous authors and researchers. At the most basic level, studying the performing and visual arts enables students to exercise their creative abilities through self-expression. While critics may claim that studying the arts is best suited for students who do not excel at more "traditional" school subjects, the lessons afforded by an education in the arts have the ability to serve all students. "From struggling with the hard work of preparing a dance

performance, to understanding that choice of color, direction of movement, or tone of voice all effect an artistic outcome, students of the arts learn singular and invaluable lessons." The arts allow for students to engage in entrepreneurial-type encounters as they learn to take responsibility for their actions and work to produce products that meet high expectations (Davis 27).

Inclusion of the arts in public education is frequently justified in terms of non-arts learning. For example, access to public-school education in the arts has been associated with increased abilities in the areas of math, reading, and writing, as well as higher scores on both IQ tests and SATs (Davis 2). Yet, the arts hold innumerable value in their own right and separate from non-arts learning. First and foremost, studying the arts allows students to gain a new skill, whether it be pottery, singing, or the ability to play the flute. The arts provide an opportunity for students to create a tangible product (even if it is a dance that exists only for a moment in time). This practice of creation allows students to understand the need for process and planning, as well as how to engage with and respect a given art form (Davis 50).

Fowler pointed out that an education in the arts promotes "…divergent rather than convergent thinking" (47). While school subjects like math, social studies, and science revolve around correct and incorrect answers, the arts are open to individual interpretation and welcome the suggestion of multiple solutions. The type of divergent thinking involved in arts creation and appreciation forces students to move beyond pure memorization to truly think about and reason their way through what they are viewing or creating. "This kind of reasoning is far more common in the real world, in which there often are many ways to do one thing well. American business needs both kinds of reasoning, not just the standard answer" (Fowler 48).

Of course, arts education also allows students to learn about and embrace diversity and uniqueness. Because each piece of art is inherently tied to its creator, and therefore the culture of the creator, the study of various art forms allows students to better understand their own personal backgrounds, as well as the backgrounds of others. Studying an African dance, replicating a Renaissance painting, or comparing musical preferences among cultures allows students to get the sort of first-hand experience and understanding of others that simple textbooks do not provide.

In showcasing the cultures and creative processes of others, the arts can truly be considered a study of humanity throughout time. Students who study the arts gain a better understanding of others, and by putting themselves in the shoes of other artists, students are able to strengthen their sense of empathy towards others (Fowler 46-53). Why did the artist choose to paint the sky such a brilliant shade of blue? How must the choreographer have felt when they staged a particular section of their piece? What do the proportions of a particular statue illustrate about the artist's (and therefore, society's) understanding of anatomy and the human body? These are all questions the arts prepare students to answer by encouraging intelligent thought and a sense of empathy.

Dance in Public Education

The current status of dance in public education is a rather complex and somewhat difficult matter to comprehend. As Abigail F. Agresta-Stratton stated,

> …where Dance is housed within a school curriculum varies from state to state, district to district, and even school to school. Dance might lie solely as a distinct subject, solely under the Arts, solely in PE, split between the two, or there could be some variation of these possibilities. Each state, district, or school has its own mandates and regulations concerning:
>
> 1. In which department Dance resides.
> 2. How credits are awarded.

3. Teacher certification or licensure requirements.
4. Student graduation requirements.
5. University admission requirements. (5)

Not only are there discrepancies nationwide regarding whether participation in dance should count as a PE or arts credit and who may or may not be qualified to teach dance, but there is also a fair amount of confusion that arises from the legislation surrounding written policies on dance education, which in turn affects our ability to understand the current place of dance in public education. A great deal of federal legislation neglects to separately identify the various arts as "music," "dance," "theater," and "visual arts." Instead, these four very different fields of study tend to be collectively lumped together under the title "the arts" or "music and visual arts" ("Threats, Bonbright 107). When these two overarching categories, particularly the latter of the two, are used, it is understandable that the field of dance may be forgotten at the state level, where officials are primarily concerned with "music and visual arts."

This vague association of dance with "the arts" creates a further problem when it comes to assessing the success and status of dance in the public-school sector. Dance is frequently "… omitted from national surveys designed to capture important data for arts education in U.S. schools" ("Threats, Bonbright 108). More often than not, this focus of national surveys on music and the visual arts, combined with a lack of funding towards dance surveys through the National Assessments for Educational Progress, gives the misleading impression that there may not be enough dance programs in the country to attain any valuable information on dance in public education. However, this could not be further from the truth, as there are thousands of dance programs to be found in public schools across the nation; the National Dance Education Organization estimates that 3.5 million students study dance in public school each year ("Threats, Bonbright 108).

Available data indicate that in 2009-2010, three percent of elementary schools offered specific instruction in dance. Of the schools comprising this three percent, thirty-seven percent indicated dance was included under the music curriculum, while forty-four percent grouped dance under physical education. Furthermore, of the three percent of public elementary schools offering dance instruction in the 2009-2010 school year, fifty-three percent indicated that dance instruction is offered to participating students on a basis of at least once a week; roughly half of elementary schools offering dance instruction offer classes throughout the entire school year. Yet, only twenty-four percent of these elementary schools housed dedicated dance rooms with the necessary special equipment (such as mirrors and barres) in which dance classes take place (Parsad and Spiegelman 40-41).

These statistics improve only slightly when looking at public middle and high schools in the U.S. During the 2008-2009 schoolyear, twelve percent of public middle and high schools indicated they offered any form of dance instruction. Of the middle and high schools comprising this twelve percent, fifty-seven percent of schools offered one or two courses in dance, thirty percent offered between three and four courses in dance, and only thirteen percent offered five or more different dance courses. Additionally, forty-five percent of these middle and high schools offered dedicated spaces for dance instruction within their schools; the other schools offered dance either in gymnasiums or other school rooms lacking specialized dance equipment (Parsad and Spiegelman 43-44).

Fortunately, there are some positive changes being made on a nationwide level. Out of the fifty-one states (counting the District of Columbia), thirty-six states have adopted standards aligning with the National Core Arts Standards as of this year. Thirty-five states currently offer educators full certification in dance, rather than simply considering dance as an endorsement to

be added on to licensure in another content area, and twelve of these states require prospective teachers to take a content-specific assessment to obtain licensure (Kasper 1).

What's more, a number of school districts are taking it upon themselves to ensure the advancement of dance in the public education system. For example, the New York City Department of Education proudly boasts that during the 2019-2020 schoolyear, eighty-one percent of public schools serving pre-kindergarteners provided instruction in dance. Although the availability of dance offerings dropped to sixty-five percent of New York City public schools offering instruction to kindergarteners, seventy-eight percent of schools servicing students in first through fifth grade, thirty-five percent of public middle schools (sixth through eighth grade), and twenty-one percent of public high schools, these statistics are still considerably higher than the national averages. Still, the New York City Department of Education's offerings in dance linger far behind those of other art forms (for example, ninety-four percent of public high schools offer visual arts courses, compared to the twenty-one percent offering dance (NYC Department of Education 10-15). This indicates that even in districts that seem to be paving the way for dance education, there is still a fair amount of work to be done when it comes to solidifying a place for dance within America's public schools.

History of Dance Education

Despite the rather low statistics representing dance offerings in American public education, dance has a rich place in the history of mankind. The Greeks regarded dance education in the highest light, with Socrates himself recommending dance be taught "… for health, for complete and harmonious physical development, for beauty, for the ability to give pleasure to others, for 'reducing,' for the acquisition of a good appetite, for the enjoyment of sound sleep" (Kraus et al. 293). As society entered the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, dance

came to be considered an important aspect of education, allowing its students to strengthen the mind and body while helping to build character. These perceived benefits helped make dance a necessary part of instruction for both courtiers and knights (Kraus et al. 293). As dance grew to become a component of everyday life, dancing masters arrived on the scene, incorporating dance theory into their teaching. Dancing masters such as Domenico da Piacenza, Antonio Cornanzano, and Gugliemo Ebreo helped come up with a "nucleus of theory" outlining appropriate steps, movements, and qualities for dance (Kassing 64).

In the late 1600s, noted philosopher John Locke stated in his *Some Thoughts on Education* that dance "… cannot be learned too early…." due to its ability to endow students with confidence, grace, and even manliness. Similar views were adopted by educators across Europe, including the German Johann Guts Muths, whose efforts helped dance gain popularity as a form of physical exercise (Kraus et al. 294). During this time, Louis XIV opened the Académie Royale de Musique, where he spent time personally supervising the curriculum covered by dancing masters. As time progressed, dance education flourished at the Académie, later to become the Paris Opera; similar ballet and dance schools began to pop up across Europe. Additionally, the 1588 publishing of Thoiot Arbeau's instructional manual on dance, titled *Orchésographie*, helped bring attention to the need for a codified system of movement and instruction in dancing (Kassing 93-94).

Though religious attitudes in early American society, especially in the northern colonies, prevented dance from gathering much support in the country's earliest years, European treatises on dance became commonly available in the U.S. and began to sway American minds to view dance education in a more favorable light. In the early 1800s, many state colleges, church-supported colleges, and even the first women's colleges were founded; these colleges all

included dance in their educational offerings. In general, dance had begun to be associated with programs for females, but the West Point military academy helped break this stigma by requiring dance instruction for its male students in 1823 (Kraus et al. 294-295).

The inclusion of dance within the educational setting eventually made its way into schools for younger children, though public schools often questioned the morality of including dance among a school's offerings. This pushback from public schools led dance to frequently be offered in disguise under the title of musical gymnastics or calisthenics. Not surprisingly, as time progressed, dance became increasingly incorporated under the umbrella of physical education, with its proponents praising its added benefit as an appropriate pastime for all social classes. In the later 1800s, the president of Harvard University, Charles W. Eliot, went so far as to remark, "I have often said that if I were compelled to have one required subject in Harvard College, I would make it dance" (Kraus et al. 294-296).

During the early eighteenth century, dance continued to grow in popularity— that is, until "… World War II forced a hiatus on all kinds of educational innovation and growth" (Kraus et al. 305). Though some secondary schools and colleges continued to offer dance classes, the primary focus of these classes was on physical fitness, as might be expected in a country suddenly forced to focus on supplying soldiers for the war. Unfortunately, even after the war, dance's continued growth in education was threatened by a push to focus on such areas as science, engineering, and mathematics in an effort to compete with the Soviets. Similarly, the poor physical fitness of the American youth led educators to push for a greater emphasis on conditioning, rather than artistic expression through dance, in physical education classes.

> One major stumbling block preventing a fuller acceptance of the arts within American education has been the sharp distinction made between art and science in the public mind— in an era in which science is viewed as increasingly essential to our survival…. scientists are seen as rational, objective, abstract, concerned with the intellect and with

> reducing everything to a formula, while artists, on the other hand, are seen as temperamental, subjective, irrational, and chiefly concerned with the expressions of the emotions. (Kraus et al. 310).

Thankfully, this reduced belief in the merit of dance education for today's youth has not deterred dance advocates. In fact, many proponents of dance actually feel the focus on "traditional academics" has created an increased need for the creative development of students (Kraus et al. 308). Dance has only continued to infiltrate the public-school system, as well as the world of higher education; the first dance major was established at the University of Wisconsin by Margaret H'Doubler in 1926, opening the door to the creation of numerous esteemed and prolific dance programs across the county (Kassing 172). Needless to say, dance educators have persistently focused their efforts on building public interest for the arts and on keeping a spot for dance within the realm of public education.

Research on Value of Dance in Public Education

A great deal of research has been done on the value of dance education, with a multitude of studies indicating dance's strong connections to the improved character development of students who study the art. Students tend to credit their participation in dance with helping to build their confidence and perseverance (Hoggarth 59). To this end, dance education leaves "…all students touched by a sense of themselves as whole, moving, thinking, feeling, and culturally valued individuals" (Knowles 46). Learning experiences such as dance that allow students to move beyond curricular and cultural boundaries and that move beyond the traditional classroom structure have been shown to allow for a "… reflection on experience [that] can result in deep intellectual engagement that informs students' future participation in the field and in the world at large" (Milling 8).

Dance has also been linked with improved nonverbal reasoning, creative and critical thinking, and communication and social skills (Minton and Hofmeister 8).

Of course, dance has other benefits, such as increased spatial awareness, interpersonal intelligence (understanding of others gained through group collaboration), and emotional awareness, which is gained through various performances and reflections on different exercises in class (Hoggarth 9). As previously noted, it is obvious that dance instruction in public schools addresses a wide variety of learning preferences, while catering to the numerous forms of intelligence (Cook 28). As Cook noted, many public-school students find a safe haven in dance; she stated that

> the essential nature of artistic expression imbues the arts with a power to engage the human mind and spirit in a manner that is unequaled by other endeavors. This power to evoke an emotional involvement on the part of the learner is a potent force that draws in even the most marginalized of learners. (29)

Twenty-First Century Skills

The goal of education is frequently recognized as to best prepare and equip students to function effectively in the world. "As our society has changed, we are re-visiting this expectation, and focusing more explicitly on the particular skills and competencies that have been highlighted as essential for functioning in our technological world" (Care et al. 8). To this end, a set of skills frequently identified as "twenty-first century skills" has recently become the focus of much reform in the field of education. However, various frameworks exist which take differing viewpoints on the current state of humanity and those characteristics that need to be emphasized in education. As Great Schools Partnership stated, "the '21st century skills' concept encompasses a wide-ranging and amorphous body of knowledge and skills that is not easy to define and that has not been officially codified or categorized."

For example, some frameworks look at matters from the broadest level, focusing on the generic targets of knowing, doing, being, and living together, while other frameworks provide a much more detailed and explicit list of competencies for which schools should aim to educate (Care et al. 4). Groups like The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, P21, recognize three overarching skills needed for the success of future generations. These skills include

> learning skills (creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem-solving; communication and collaboration), literacy skills (information literacy; media literacy; ICT literacy), and life skills (flexibility and adaptability; initiative and self-direction; social and cross-cultural skills; productivity and accountability; leadership and responsibility) (van Lar et al. 2).

Still, despite differing views on how to approach and identify target skills for education, in general, there is a great deal of consistency across global organizations and research groups as to the competencies which should be included among the set of twenty-first century skills. "The majority of identified competencies generally fall within the cognitive and social domains" (Care et al. 4). Other competencies, such as technical and vocational skills, global citizenship, and sustainability also feature on most lists of twenty-first century skills.

In 2012, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, along with the Brookings Institution, organized the Learning Metrics Task Force to compile a series of recommendations for the improvement of learning outcomes on a global scale. This task force, which consulted with 1700 people representing 118 countries, determined that twenty-first century education should focus on seven domains of learning: physical wellbeing, culture and the arts, social and emotional health, communication and literacy, learning and cognition, numeracy (mathematics), and technology and science (Care et al. 5). This list of skills has since been expanded upon and revised by multiple organizations, with much focus on collaborative problem-solving, often deemed a key trait to the success of future generations.

With this said, such problem-solving skills as analysis, goal-setting, flexibility and adaptability, perseverance, awareness, participation, ability to lead, motivation, and social regulation have increasingly been included among lists of twenty-first century skills (Care et al. 8).

Dance as a Means of Teaching Twenty-First Century Skills

Dance education serves as an excellent vessel for teaching twenty-first century skills. A study by Minton and Hofmeister indicated a number of similarities and connections exist between the learnings of International Baccalaureate (IB) dance students and such twenty-first century skills as flexibility, accountability, social responsibility, collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking, and self-direction (67). The authors of this study found that IB dance students were dedicated to solving problems and aiding fellow students in the acquisition of necessary dance skills for group success. Many students cited their participation in dance as having helped them improve their focus and ability to express themselves (falling under the umbrella of effective communication). Furthermore, students in Minton and Hofmeister's study were observed to frequently analyze their own bodies and movement creations, as well as those of others. This ability to analyze, critique, and improve a creative work demonstrated the abilities to problem-solve, adapt, use bodily awareness, and persevere, all of which are central to the twenty-first century skillset (74).

Further research showed that dance education allows students to experience and develop their ability to collaborate with others, drawing on both interpersonal and intrapersonal communication skills. Students involved in public-school dance programs have remarked that their experience in dance has helped teach respect for others, as well as the ability to empathize with others; "…dance often requires multidimensional practices of respect extending from

personal to social, encouraging verbal, physical, and emotional rapport" (Fritchel 47). Dance brings with it many challenges, such as navigating the various artistic visions and physical capabilities of various members within a group, yet dance also allows students to practice their problem-solving, negotiating, and leadership abilities to a degree that is allowed in few other classes. As Fritchel noted,

> …some of the ways students experience dance are central to the [twenty-first century skills] framework, some are more distant to the framework, and some float around the periphery of identified learning outcomes... Students understand dance in ways that relate to well-being and health. They experience dance as a form of exercise and a mediator of stress. Arguably, such experiences translate into understanding health literacy as defined by P21, in part, as "understanding preventive physical and mental health measures, including … exercise … and stress reduction." (48)

Clearly, dance education allows students to continue to develop and put to use a great number of skills that will benefit them in their life beyond school. In our current educational climate, where greater emphasis is continually being put on the teaching and acquisition of twenty-first century skills, it seems obvious that dance education should be utilized as an interactive and meaningful way to teach a multitude of these skills.

Barriers to Dance Education

While an average of eighty-four percent of participants surveyed by the Department of Education felt music and visual arts are highly important relative to other academic courses of study, only forty percent of participants felt the same way about dance (Carey et a. 31). Viewpoints such as these contribute to the lack of dance offerings among American public schools. As mentioned previously, ninety-four percent of American public elementary schools offered instruction in music in the 2009-10 school year, while ninety-one percent of middle and high schools offered music in the 2008-09 school year. These percentages far outshine dance offerings for the same time period: only three percent of schools offered dance at the elementary

level in 2009-10, and only twelve percent offered dance at the middle and high school levels in 2008-09 (Parsad and Spiegelman 2). Quite clearly, there is a correlation between public opinion towards dance and its prevalence within public schools. When considering the statistics in this light, it becomes apparent that we must change the perspectives of the general public towards dance, as well as the views of public-school personnel, before we begin to see any real change in the frequency at which dance can be found within public schools.

Similarly, the perspectives and values of educators and administrators must be considered, and subsequently changed, if we are to see an increase in dance offerings in the public-school setting. As Blackburn pointed out, the pressures of obtaining funding and meaningful test results in "core" subjects may also contribute to the lack of support for dance within public schools:

> Educators are biased to prioritize things that are well-assessed in school settings… Teachers are motivated by testing and data, so the less obvious skills that are more important to survival outside schools aren't incentivized... All the money comes from tested skills, so no one is looking at the non-tested skills.

While a massive change in the way in which testing is viewed and incentivized will certainly not happen overnight, helping education officials and educators begin to see the value in an education in dance may be a valid start in initiating change.

The low frequency at which dance can be found within the public-school setting may also have something to do with the traditions and historical barriers noted previously. Beginning as early as the 1700s, dance was considered to be a primarily feminine pursuit and when dance was offered in schools, it was often promoted as a means of exercise, frequently equated to or offered alongside aerobics and gymnastics (Kraus et al. 295-296). In a sense, dance may be said to have a dual identity within public schools— we have reached a point where it is "…virtually impossible to separate dance taught as an art form from the physical education curriculum"

("Threats"; Bonbright 108). Of course, this historical acceptance of dance as a subject matter that is not necessary for all individuals to study and that can be combined with other areas of learning is only partially to blame for the current state of dance within U.S. public schools.

Dance educators and advocates must also be held accountable for the lack of dance in American public education. A quick search through virtually any library or online database will show numerous articles and studies spanning earlier centuries covering the seemingly infinite benefits of studying music, while the same sort of search for studies on the benefits of dance will bring up fewer results, mostly dated from the most recent century. If there is to be a greater interest in dance's survival and growth within the public education sector, proponents of dance must begin to put the same sort of investment into quality research and education that music has demonstrated throughout history. In speaking about previous generations of dance educators, Minton noted,

> Why are there not more dance programs in the public schools? Because people don't really understand dance … they don't understand what dance can do for the students. But, I have to say … that's partially our fault. Because we were concerned with teaching students how to do choreography and how to have good technique, and I don't think we were really concerned about trying to explain what we were doing and the benefits about what we were doing to the rest of the populace out there. But we've got to be concerned with that, or the people out there that are not dancers or dance educators— they're never going to appreciate us. They'll never understand. So that's our job, I'm afraid. (Minton)

The lack of dance offerings within public schools thus becomes a matter of advocacy, and supporters of dance must strengthen and refine their efforts if they wish to see any real and lasting change.

Current Dance Advocacy Efforts

Fortunately, proponents of dance education are working to carve out a larger space for dance within public education. In 2002, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act finally mandated that dance, when offered in schools as an art form, must be taught by a qualified dance

educator (“Threats”; Bonbright 109). Though this sort of legislation represents a positive step on the staircase of dance advocacy, there is still quite a long way to go to better advocate for dance’s inclusion in public education.

Many advocates, such as Bonbright, feel advocacy efforts need to be directed towards clarifying exactly what dance education is and where it should be positioned within the field of education; she stated that both students and teachers suffer from the lack of having a unified opinion on the role and purpose of dance education (“Threats”; Bonbright 108). Others suggest the key to better advocacy lies in educating current dance scholars on how to help promote their art form. Milling recommended students should become familiar with political terminology (such as bill, amendment, veto, and fiscal year) in order to develop a heightened awareness of the ways in which legislation and funding affect dance education. She went on to suggest students should reach out directly to local politicians and administrators to initiate a conversation on dance education and its benefits (Milling 9-11).

Organizations like the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) continue to work tirelessly to advocate for a future in which dance education occupies a stronger presence in public schools. Through quarterly journals and annual conferences, NDEO aims to advocate for dance education and support all those who practice and teach dance (Stinson 6).

National Dance Education Organization
Advocacy Recommendations

NDEO encourages all dance educators to be aware of their responsibility to the field of dance education, as well as their potential to incite change:

> The National Dance Education Organization’s (NDEO) vision of advocacy realizes that transformation happens from the ground up. There is power in numbers, and as the largest dance education membership organization in the United States, we can collectively establish a national perception of dance as a necessary and accessible art form. Advocacy happens at several levels and serves multiple purposes… Successful advocates know whom to call on for help and what resources lie at their disposal to

> ensure the longevity of their dance program. It is we, the dance teachers, who must advocate at the local level by building strong and enduring dance programs that will stand the tests of time and funding cutbacks. (McGreevy-Nichols and Provost 83).

To this end, in 2014, NDEO published a list of recommendations for dance advocates to help make a difference. These recommendations included communicating with others (friends, school officials, and government personnel) on the importance of dance, using evidence and research to market and better one's dance offerings, and utilizing one's network of fellow dance educators and advocates to gain the necessary support to enact positive change (McGreevy-Nichols and Provost 83-84). The quest to improve the status of dance education within public schools is a long one, but one in which advocacy must play a crucial part.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which both dance educators and non-dance familiars view dance and its place in the public education system. The goal was to compare data from the two groups in order to answer the following research questions:

Q1 What barriers or objections exist when it comes to incorporating dance within the public-school setting?

Q2 What discrepancies exist between the viewpoints of dance educators and non-dance familiars when it comes to dance and its value within the public education system?

Q3 What specific steps can be taken to highlight the importance of dance education in the public-school setting?

In this chapter, the researcher discussed methods used throughout this study not only to carry out the research protocols described below, but also to examine the data obtained as an outcome of this study.

Preparation for the Study

After determining the purpose and goals for this study, the researcher organized a description of the purpose of this study, methods of participant recruitment, and data collection and analysis procedures. Sample consent forms, one for the dance educators and one for the non-dance familiars, as well as several research instruments to be used in this study were also added to this narrative. These various documents were sent to the University of Northern Colorado's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and approval was obtained for the study (see Appendix A). Once IRB approval was attained, the researcher began conducting outreach for potential

participants and sent out the IRB-approved consent forms to all interested parties. The documents submitted to receive approval for this research, including advertisements for social media and consent forms, can be found in Appendices B through D.

Challenges Related to the Coronavirus-19 Pandemic

Initially, the researcher had planned to solely interview dance educators and administrators working in the public-system. However, due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and the stressors this pandemic placed on public school officials across the country, many of the administrators the researcher reached out to failed to respond to a request for participation in this study or stated they felt they did not have adequate time to devote to this study. Therefore, the researcher broadened the administrator category of participants to include all non-dance educators working in the public-school system. This change was submitted as a new protocol to the IRB, and once approved, the researcher was able to find many willing non-dance familiars who were eager to participate in the study.

Participants

Considering that a large part of this study involved identifying discrepancies in viewpoints between dance educators and others working in the public-school system who did not necessarily share a predisposition for the arts, the researcher recognized the importance of surveying two separate groups: dance educators working in the public-school system, and non-dance familiars working in the public-school system, including administrators, educators, superintendents, and human resource officials.

Participants were recruited largely through online advertising on social media; the researcher posted a brief description of the study and a graphic (see Appendix D) to social

media, and this post was shared by the researcher's personal network of dance and educator colleagues and also to a number of online Facebook groups and discussion forums. Other participants were recruited through the researcher's personal connections in various school districts and throughout the dance community. Due to the nature of their employment, all participants were above the age of eighteen and provided consent through the completion of an online consent form, as well as their surveys. One of the first questions on the survey asked participants to confirm that participation was voluntary.

Dance Educators

Nine dance educators participated in this study. While all participants worked in the public-school setting, their specific positions (in terms of grade level and teaching assignments), as well as their ages, teaching experience, and location varied greatly.

Out of the nine participants, 22.22% were between the ages of 25 and 34, 55.56% were between the ages of 35 and 44, 11.11% were between the ages of 45 and 54, and 11.11% were older than 55 years of age. These statistics are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Ages of Dance Educators

Age Range	Percentage of Teachers	Answer Count
25 – 34 years	22.22	2
35 – 44 years	55.56	5
45 – 54 years	11.11	1
55 – 64 years	11.11	1
65 years or older	0	0

The researcher felt it was important to collect information regarding location of participants as well, as the researcher hoped to gain perspectives of dance educators across the country. Approximately half of these dance educators hailed from the South, with 55.56% reporting they worked in the South, 22.22% worked in the Northeast, and 22.22% of dance educators lived and worked in the West. These numbers are further organized in Table 2.

Table 2

Locations of Dance Educators

Location	Percentage of Teachers	Answer Count
Northeast	22.22	2
South	55.56	5
Midwest	0	0
West	22.22	2

Among these teachers, years of service teaching dance in the public-school system also varied. According to the received responses, 33.33% of participants had taught in their current or most recent position for three years or less, 11.11% had taught in their position for four to six years, 22.22% had taught between seven and nine years, and 33.33% had taught for more than sixteen years in their current or most recent position. The participants' years of teaching experience are further illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

Years of Teaching Experience of Dance Educators

Number of Years	Percentage of Teachers	Answer Count
0 – 3 years	33.33	3
4 – 6 years	11.11	1
7 – 9 years	22.22	2
10 – 12 years	0	0
13 –15 years	0	0
16 years or more	33.33	3

It is not uncommon for dance educators to be tasked with teaching other subjects in conjunction with dance in the public-school setting. When asked if they solely taught dance or taught dance in addition to another subject or subjects, 66.67% of participants stated they only taught dance within their school, while 33.33% stated they taught dance in addition to one or more additional disciplines.

A number of grade levels and age ranges were covered by the nine dance participants. Of dance educators surveyed, 22.22% worked at the middle school level, 33.33% worked at the high school level, and the remaining 44.44% of participants worked in specialized positions that do not fit the categories of elementary, middle, and high school. These alternate dance education positions included the coordinator of a program for Gifted and Talented students serving grades 3-8, an arts coordinator overseeing dance at a special education public school, a dance educator serving both elementary and middle school, and an educator teaching dance under the heading of "Personal Training." These positions are better illustrated in Figure 1.

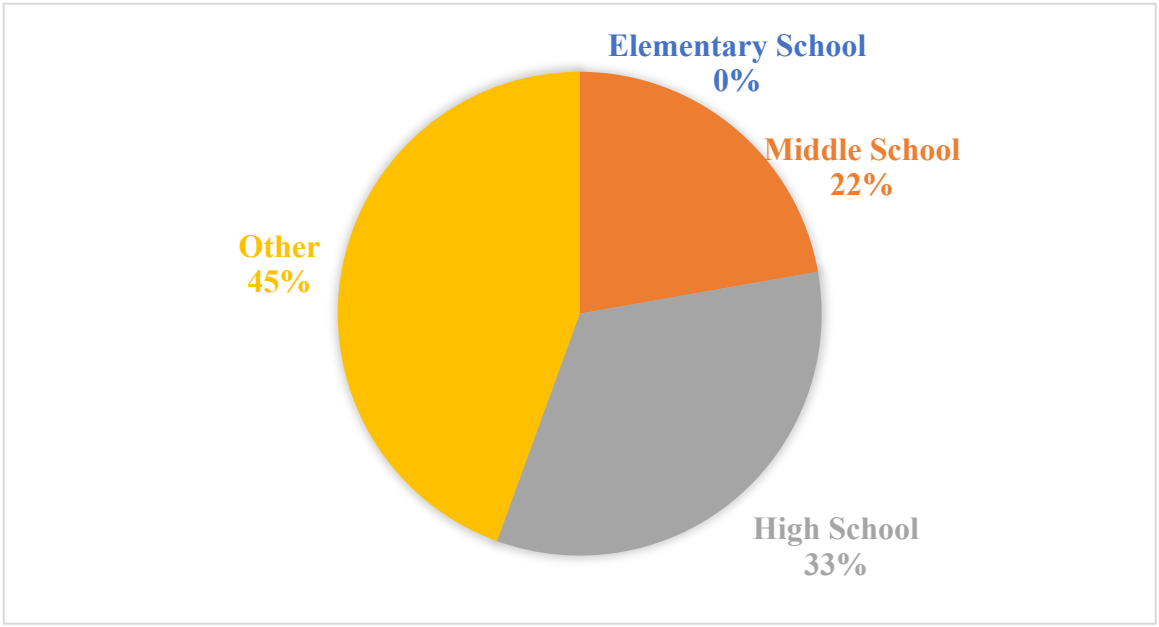

Figure 1: Environments in Which Dance Educators Taught

Non-Dance Familiars

In addition to the dance educators noted above, twelve non-dance familiars were included in this study. Like the dance educators, all non-dance familiars worked in the public-school system, with students in a variety of age groups. They also had varied backgrounds and teaching specialties.

Of the non-dance familiars, 58.33% of participants reported being between 25 and 34 years of age, 16.67% reported they were between the ages of 35 and 44, 8.33% expressed they were between 55 and 64 years of age, and 16.67% of participants stated they were 65 years of age or older. This breakdown is further illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Ages of Non-Dance Familiars

Age Range	Percentage of Teachers	Answer Count
25 – 34 years	58.33	7
35 – 44 years	16.67	2
45 – 54 years	0	0
55 – 64 years	8.33	1
65 years or older	16.67	2

As was the case with the dance educators, the researcher also asked the non-dance familiars to report their location. In terms of location, 16.67% of non-dance familiars lived and worked in the Northeast, 16.67% reported they worked in the Midwest, and 66.67% of participants worked in the South. These numbers are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5

Locations of Non-Dance Familiars

Location	Percentage of Teachers	Answer Count
Northeast	16.67	2
South	66.67	8
Midwest	16.67	2
West	0	0

When looking at the non-dance familiars' years of service in their current or most recent position, 33.33% of participants in this group reported they had worked in their current or most recent position for three years or less, 25.00% had worked in their position for four to six years,

8.33% had worked in their position between seven and nine years, 8.33% had worked in their position for thirteen to fifteen years, and 25.00% had worked in their current position for sixteen or more years (see Table 6).

Table 6

Years of Teaching Experience of Non-Dance Familiars

Number of Years	Percentage of Teachers	Answer Count
0 – 3 years	33.33	4
4 – 6 years	25.00	3
7 – 9 years	8.33	1
10 – 12 years	0	0
13 –15 years	8.33	1
16 years or more	25.00	3

The teaching specialties of these educators spanned a great range, with 16.67% teaching elementary school, 75.00% teaching at the secondary level, and 8.33% working as administrators in the public-school system. In terms of content area in which the non-familiars taught, 16.67% of participants taught math, 8.33% taught social studies, 8.33% taught science, 41.67% taught English, and 25.00% fell in the "Other" category. Specifically, those teachers that could not be categorized under one content area included a curriculum specialist for social studies, a theatre arts teacher, and a third grade generalized teacher. These statistics are further illustrated in Figure 2.

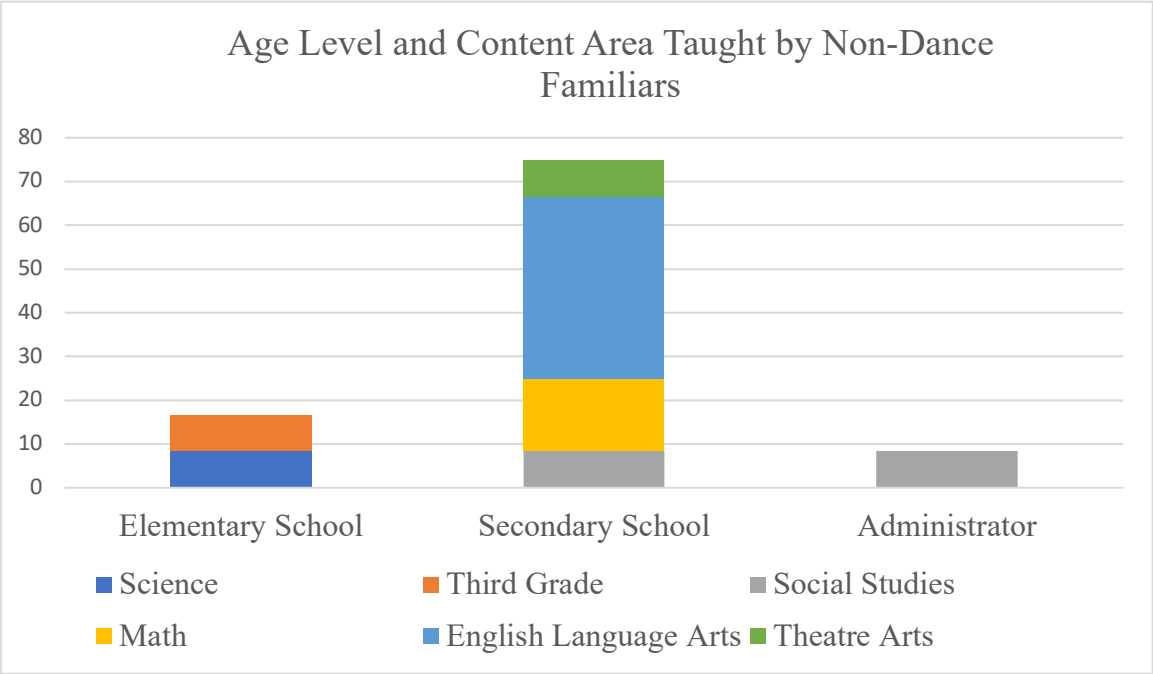

Figure 2: Environments in Which Dance Educators Taught – Age Level and Content Area

Of course, it also was important for the researcher to understand if these non-dance educators had ever taken dance themselves before. According to responses, 25.00% of participants had never studied dance before, while 75.00% had studied dance in some context before, whether through a college course, classes at a private studio, or through ballroom dance lessons. These responses are further analyzed in Figure 3.

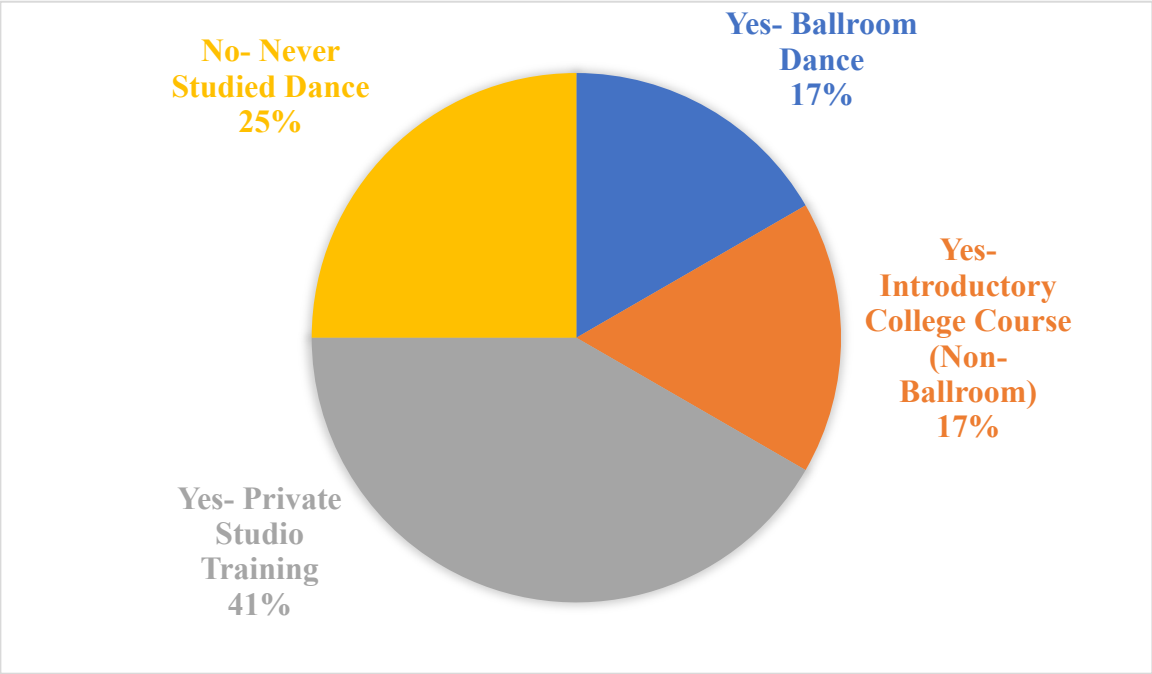

Figure 3: Non-Dance Familiars' Past Exposure to Dance

Research Instrumentation

The participants accessed one of two online surveys through Qualtrics, an online program used to collect and analyze data and offered through the University of Northern Colorado; dance educators and non-dance familiars were provided links to separate surveys (see Appendix C). While the two surveys mirrored each other in many aspects, some questions (such as specific teaching role) catered specifically to the participant group in question.

Each participant was emailed a unique participant code with which to access their survey. The dance educator survey contained sixteen questions, while the non-dance familiar survey contained seventeen questions. The non-dance educator survey contained an extra question used to assess whether the non-dance educators' schools offered dance or not.

Questions pertaining to age, location, years of experience, teaching position, and background in dance (for non-dance familiars), which are described above, were included to give context and insight into the participant pool included in this survey. Further questions prompted

participants to select twenty-first century skills they felt could be strengthened through participation in regular dance classes. Additionally, participants were asked to rank the top ten twenty-first century skills they believed would lead to overall student success and to justify their rankings. Finally, participants were asked several questions relating to perceived barriers to the inclusion and growth of dance classes in the public-school system. These surveys can be viewed in Appendix C.

The Drafted Interview Questions

The researcher drafted and received IRB approval for additional sets of one-on-one interview questions, one to be used with the dance educators, and one to be used with non-dance educators. These interview questions were meant to provide elaboration and further insight into any potentially unclear or vague survey responses. In the consent form and social media advertisements, these interviews were described as optional. However, many participants opted not to participant in the additional interview, citing similar concerns of limited time and life stressors related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision to forego the use of the optional one-on-one interview questions was further solidified as the researcher began to dissect the survey questions. The researcher determined a great deal of data and meaningful information could be garnered from the surveys alone, rendering the use of the optional interview questions to be superfluous. These drafted interview questions can be found in Appendix E.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative means of analysis were used to analyze the data obtained from this study. Most of the data were analyzed quantitatively, as the majority of survey questions asked participants to select answers from a provided list of options. However, other survey questions were open-ended and required qualitative analysis; for these questions, the

researcher read all responses and searched for common themes conveyed across the participant responses. In some cases, the common themes that emerged could be grouped and organized in such a way that data could be presented quantitatively.

Qualitative Analysis

When using qualitative analysis, the researcher imported all open-ended responses into a spreadsheet and carefully read through all the received responses. The researcher looked for common themes that emerged within the survey responses and, when appropriate, grouped responses by theme in order to conduct further analysis. The outcomes of this analysis will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

Quantitative Analysis

When possible, open-ended questions were analyzed quantitatively, since the researcher was able to group some of the responses together under over-arching categories in order to organize and display the responses in a visual format. However, many of the questions in the survey required yes or no answers or the selection of responses from a provided list of options. These responses could be analyzed quantitatively by determining the frequency at which each answer was selected.

However, one section of the survey in particular required a more detailed quantitative analysis. To help better understand the findings described in the following discussion chapter, the analysis of this portion of the survey will be discussed here. Participants were asked to select what they viewed as the ten most important twenty-first century skills and rank them in order from most important to least important in terms of student success. To analyze these data, the researcher had to find a way to determine the overall relative importance of the skills as determined by each of the two participant groups. The researcher prescribed a point value for

each ranking. For example, all skills deemed to be most important were assigned a value of 10 points, the second most important skills received a value of nine points, and so on. The researcher counted how many times each listed skill was ranked first and multiplied this by ten points, how many times each skill was ranked second and multiplied this by nine points, how many times each skill was ranked third and multiplied this by eight points— all the way down to the skill ranked in tenth place. The resulting products for each skill were then added together to arrive at a total point value for each skill (see Step 1 of Figure 4). Finally, the point values were converted to percentages, with the highest-ranking point value serving as the denominator in each equation (step 2 in the equation displayed in Figure 4). See Figure 4 for a breakdown of the equations used to determine the relative importance of each twenty-first century skill.

Step 1:

$$(\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 1st\ ranking\ \times\ 10)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 2nd\ ranking\ \times\ 9)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 3rd\ ranking\ \times\ 8)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 4th\ ranking\ \times\ 7)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 5th\ ranking\ \times\ 6)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 6th\ ranking\ \times\ 5)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 7th\ ranking\ \times\ 4)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 8th\ ranking\ \times\ 3)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 9th\ ranking\ \times\ 2)$$
$$+\ (\#\ of times\ Skill\ n\ appeared\ in\ 10th\ ranking\ \times\ 1)$$
$$=\ Total\ point\ value\ of\ Skill\ n$$

Step 2:

$$Total\ point\ value\ of\ Skill\ n\ \div point\ value\ of\ highest\ ranking\ skill$$
$$=\ relative\ importance\ percentage\ of\ Skill\ n$$

Figure 4: Equations Used to Arrive at Relative Importance Values for 21st Century Skills

Summary of Methodology

This chapter outlined the methods the researcher used to investigate the three research questions outlined above. Electronic surveys were extended to nine dance educators and twelve non-dance familiars, with survey questions helping to identify participants' views on dance, its place in the public-school system, and perceived barriers to its growth in education. Most of the data derived from this study was gained from closed-ended questions and was analyzed quantitatively. However, open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively, with the researcher

searching for common themes among responses. Detailed findings and a complete analysis of these data can be found in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to identify discrepancies between the viewpoints of dance educators and non-dance familiars in terms of the two participant groups' views on dance education and its value in the field of education, as well as to identify barriers to and potential ways to aid in the growth of dance within the public-school system. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis were used to help answer the three research questions presented in the Introduction chapter. In the following chapter, the researcher discussed the data obtained from the aforementioned surveys as it pertained to the research questions around which this study revolved.

Ranking of Twenty-First Century Skills

In order to assess how participants perceived dance's value to the education system, the researcher chose to analyze if dance educators and non-dance familiars felt dance could help teach the most important twenty-first century skills. However, before this could be done, the researcher needed to determine which specific twenty-first century skills dance educators and non-dance familiars viewed as being most important for overall student success. The quantitative analysis of these rankings is shown in Figure 5 and are described in detail below.

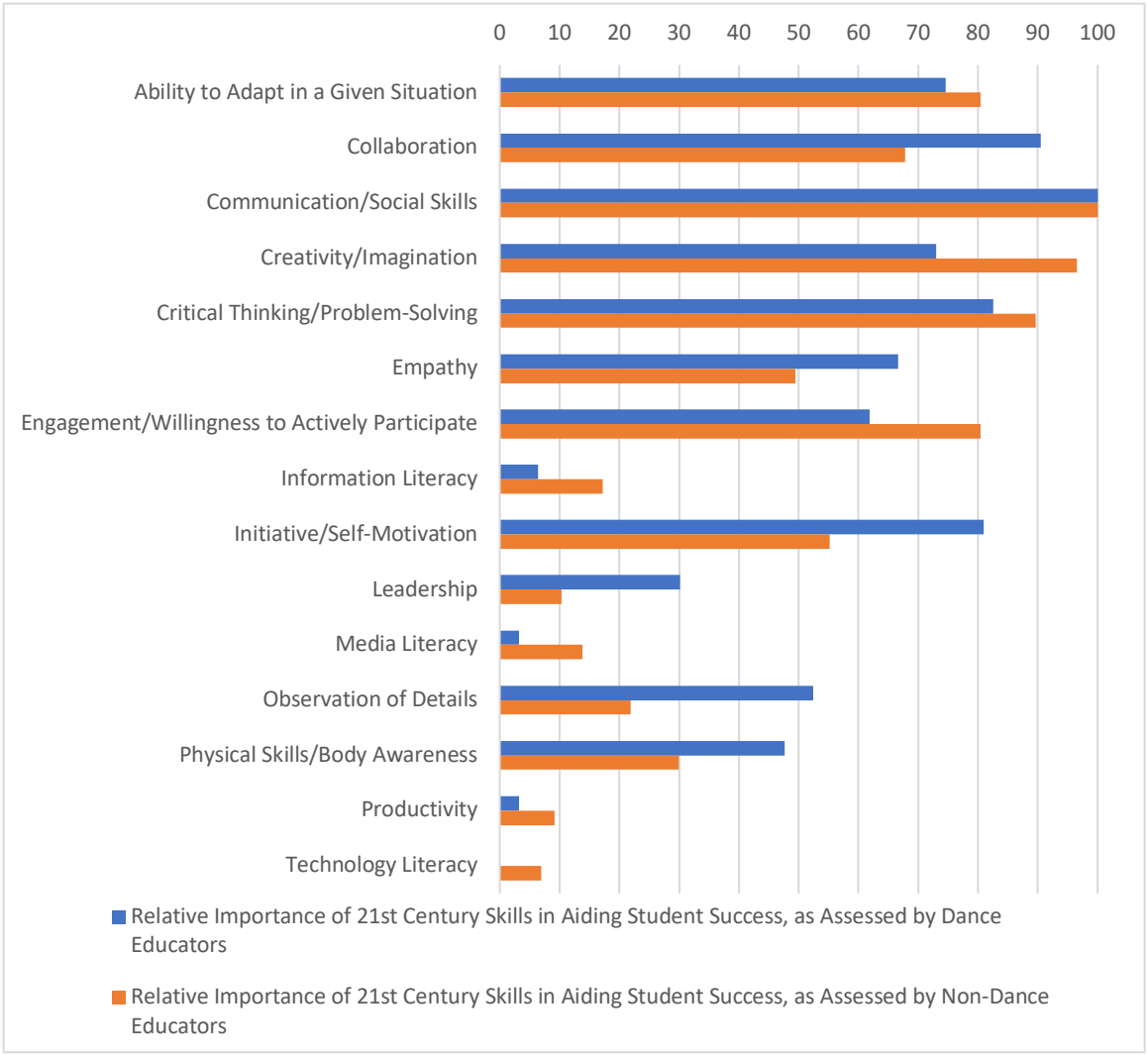

Figure 5: Perceptions of Relative Importance of 21st Century Skills in Aiding Student Success Presented as Percentages

The above figure illustrates the relative ranking of twenty-first century skills when it comes to ensuring overall student success, as perceived by both participant groups. Quantitative analysis of the dance educator group's responses showed that this group felt the twenty-first century skills listed in the survey could be ranked from most important to least important as follows: 1) communication/social skills, 2) collaboration, 3) critical thinking/problem-solving, 4) initiative/self-motivation, 5) ability to adapt to a given situation, 6) creativity/imagination, 7) empathy, 8) engagement/willingness to participate, 9) observation of details, 10) physical

skills/body awareness, 11) leadership, 12) information literacy, 13) media literacy, 14) productivity, 15) technology literacy.

Analysis of the non-dance familiar's responses revealed the following ranking of twenty-first century skills, from most to least important: 1) communication/social skills, 2) creativity/imagination, 3) critical thinking/problem-solving, 4 and 5) ability to adapt to a given situation and engagement/willingness to participate (these two skills were listed as equally important by this participant group), 6) collaboration, 7) initiative/self-motivation, 8) empathy, 9) physical skills/body awareness, 10) observation of details, 11) information literacy, 12) media literacy, 13) leadership, 14) productivity, 15) technology literacy.

Comparison of Rankings Between Participant Groups

As evidenced by the rankings, both subject groups felt the development of communication and social skills to be the most crucial in terms of aiding future student success, and both groups viewed productivity and technology literacy should be ranked in the fourteenth and fifteenth spots, respectively. Further examination showed a large number of similarities between the two groups' rankings. With the exception of four skills, the two groups ranked each given twenty-first century skill within one or two places of the other group. For example, on average, the dance educators felt empathy should be placed in the seventh ranking, while the non-dance familiars placed empathy as the eighth most important skill; dance educators listed observation of details as the ninth most important skill, while non-dance familiars placed this skill in the tenth slot. This illustrates, that for the most part, dance educators and non-dance familiars are largely in agreement on the relative importance of the different twenty-first century skills in aiding future student successes.

Of course, there were a few skills for which the two groups' rankings did not closely align. These skills included collaboration (ranked second most important by dance educators and sixth most important by non-dance familiars), initiative/self-motivation (ranked fourth most important by dance educators and seventh by non-dance familiars), creativity/imagination (ranked sixth by dance educators and second by non-dance familiars), and engagement/willingness to participate (ranked eighth by dance educators and fourth by non-dance familiars). Differences in the rankings of these skills, including potential reasons for these differences, will be further discussed in the conclusion of this paper.

Explanation of Participant Rankings

Participants in both groups were asked to briefly explain the thought process behind their chosen rankings of the various twenty-first century skills. Across both groups, participants expressed a keen interest in setting students up for success, basing their rankings on what they felt the future of civilization would require of the upcoming generation. One non-dance familiar justified their choices by citing the perceived inadequacies of the current adult population, saying, "Good communication and social skills are important and/or lacking in many adults." Another non-dance familiar expressed they ranked the provided skills by thinking about the need to solve "…world problems like climate change and imperialism." Dance educators expressed a similar responsibility to look towards the future in choosing skills that would help students achieve. One participant from this group stated, "…it is important to take away 'real life' and 'every day' skills that will help the whole-student," while another expressed the notion that guiding students towards future success requires the educator pick skills based on individual student needs: "I think that understanding your students comes first, then planning and adapting for what they need [comes next]."

Beliefs on Skills Strengthened Through Dance

The researcher was interested in understanding which skills participants in both groups felt could be strengthened through regular participation in dance classes. Thus, one of the survey questions asked, "Which of the following skills or abilities (if any) do you believe can be strengthened through participation in regular dance classes?" As evidenced by Figure 6, dance educators were more liberal in their selection of twenty-first century skills that could be strengthened through consistent dance education than the non-dance familiars.

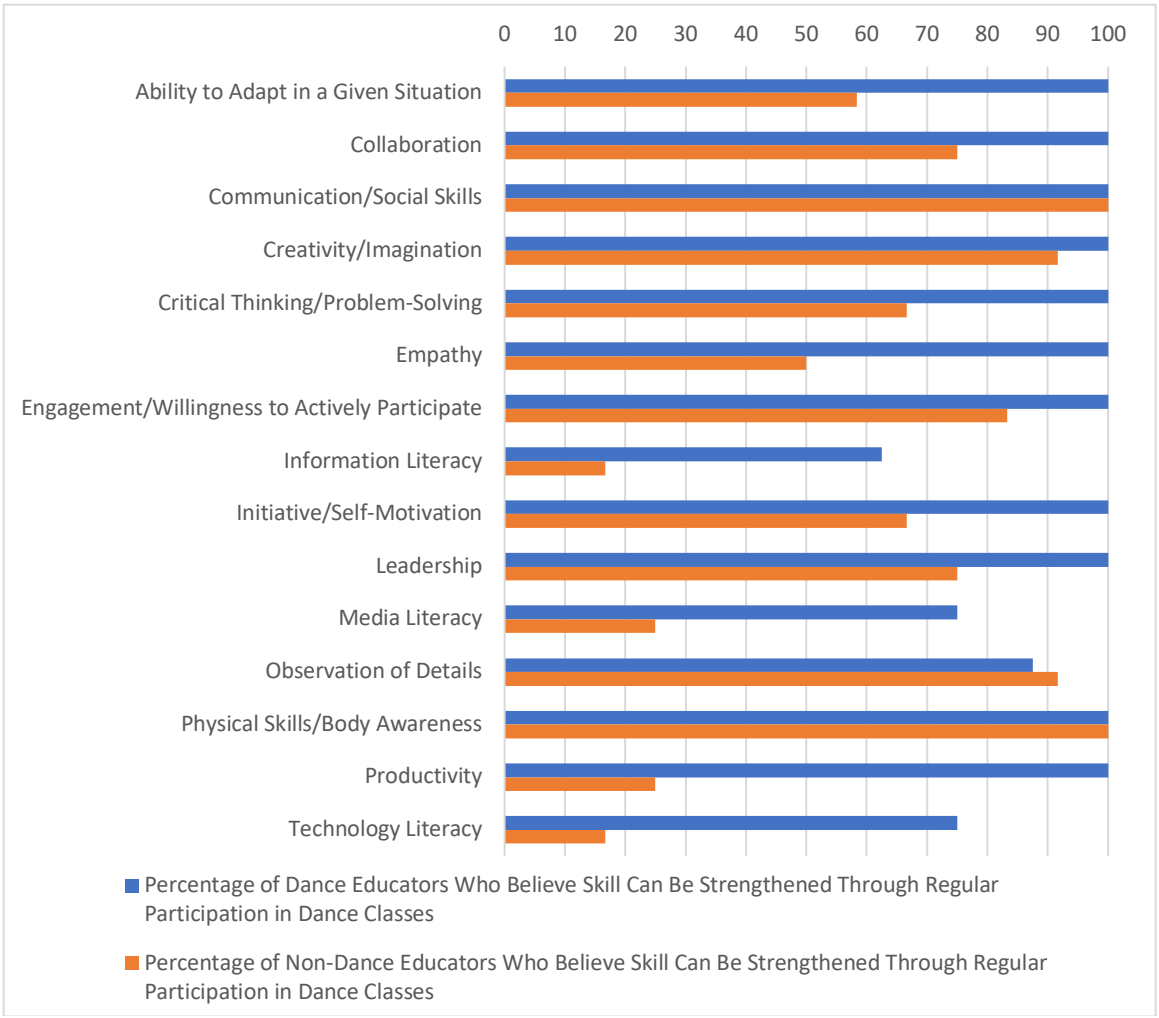

Figure 6: Perceptions of the Two Groups on the Strengthening of 21st Century Skills Through Regular Participation in Dance Classes

The above figure illustrates that 100% of dance educators agreed regular participation in dance classes could help strengthen all but four of the fifteen twenty-first century skills discussed in the survey; the four skills that were not selected by 100% of dance educators included information literacy, media literacy, observation of details, and technology literacy. Conversely, only two skills (communication/social skills and physical skills/body awareness) were identified by 100% of non-dance familiars as being able to be strengthened through dance education. These two skills were also the only ones that all participants in both groups voiced could be strengthened through regular dance training.

Beyond differences regarding skills that were voted on by all the participants in either group, a few other elements of Figure 6 should be noted. In general, dance educators showed far more belief than the non-dance familiars in the ability of dance to help reinforce the skills covered in the survey. For example, 100% of dance educators felt the ability to adapt to a given situation could be strengthened through regular participation in dance classes, while only 58.33% of non-dance familiars expressed this sentiment. Likewise, 75% of dance educators stated technology literacy could be strengthened through dance education, but only 16.67% of non-dance familiars acknowledged dance could serve as a means to strengthen this skill. Some potential explanations for these differences will be discussed in the conclusion of this paper.

Finally, it is worth noting that there is only one skill for which non-dance familiars exceeded dance educators in their belief that a twenty-first century skill could be strengthened through participation in dance. Even in this case, there was only a small margin of difference in levels of support expressed by the two participant groups. While 91.67% of non-dance familiars felt dance could assist students in developing an ability to observe details, 87.5% of dance educators selected this skill in their surveys.

Relationship Between Skills Strengthened Through Dance and Overall Importance of Skills

The researcher felt it would be valuable to analyze the relationship between the twenty-first century skills each participant group ranked as most important, and those skills that participants felt could be strengthened through regular participation in dance. This is because important areas of future discussion among educators could result from the identification of skills that were considered highly important to student success, but that participants did not think could be taught through dance. Figures 7 and 8 show these statistics for dance educators and non-dance familiars, respectively.

Figure 7: Comparative Relationship Between Skills Strengthened Through Dance and the Importance of Skills to Overall Student Success as Perceived by Dance Educators

As shown in Figure 7, for all skills, the percentage of dance educators who felt each twenty-first century skill could be strengthened through regular dance education far exceeded the relative importance assigned to each skill. According to dance educators, the top five most important twenty-first century skills, starting with most important, were 1) communication/social

skills, 2) collaboration, 3) critical thinking/problem-solving, 4) initiative/self-motivation, and 5) ability to adapt to a given situation. Quantitative analysis of the data showed that 100% of dance educators felt regular dance education could strengthen each of these top ranked skills.

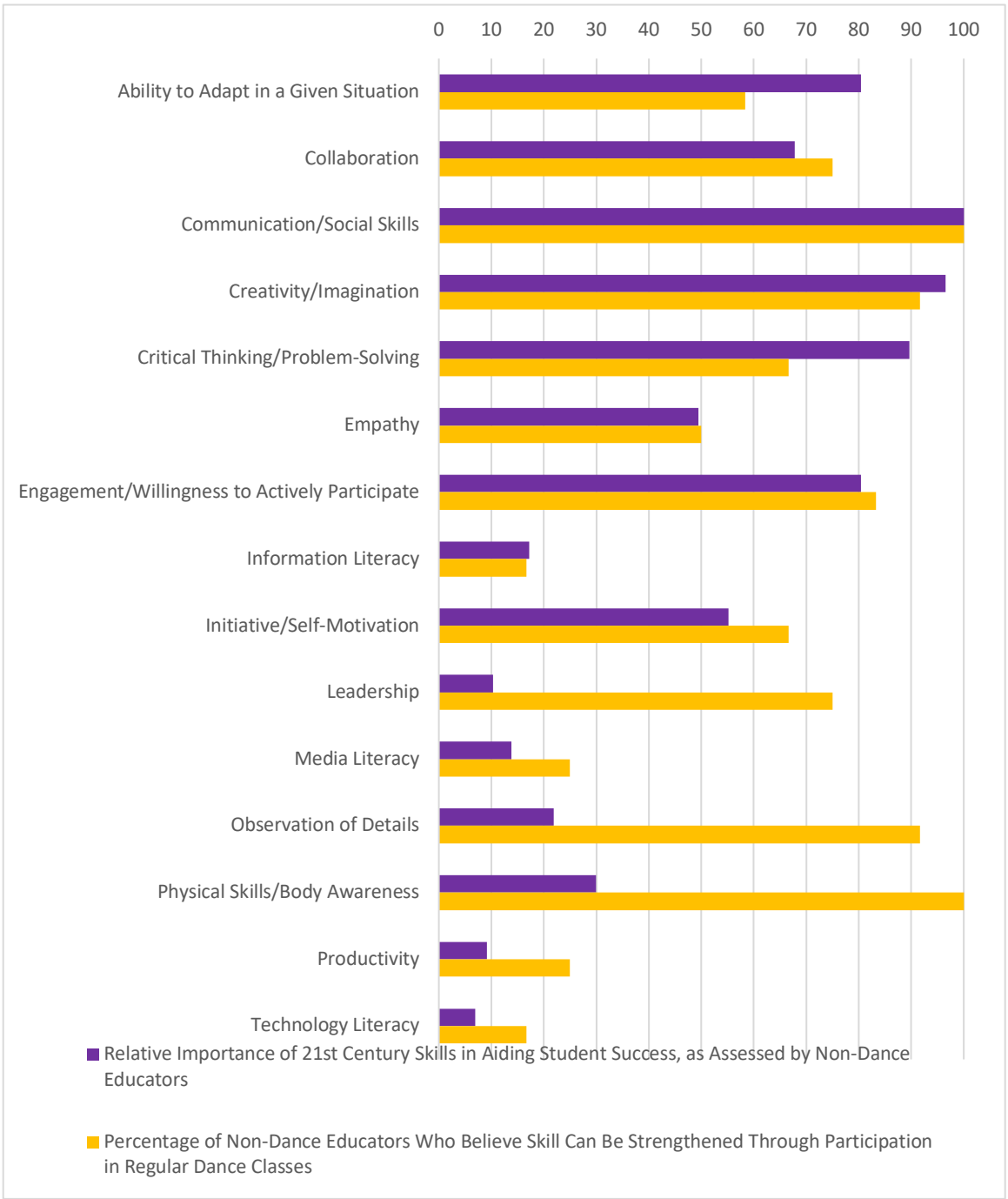

Figure 8: Comparative Relationship Between Skills Strengthened Through Dance and the Importance of Skills to Overall Student Success as Perceived by Non-Dance Educators

A somewhat different story emerges when looking at Figure 8, which focused on the perceptions of non-dance familiars. The top five most important twenty-first century skills contributing to future success, according to non-dance familiars, were 1) communication/social skills, 2) creativity/imagination, 3) critical thinking/problem-solving, and 4 and 5) ability to adapt to a given situation and engagement/willingness to participate (skills 4 and 5 were ranked as equally important by the non-dance familiars). Unlike the dance educators, the non-dance familiars did not show unanimous belief that all of these top ranked skills could be strengthened through regular dance participation. While 100% of non-dance familiars felt the top-ranked twenty-first century skill (communication/social skills) could be strengthened through dance education, 91.67% felt creativity/imagination could be strengthened through dance, 66.67% of participants believed critical/thinking/problem-solving could be strengthened through dance, 58.33% of participants felt the ability to adapt to a given situation could be taught through dance, and 83.33% of participants felt engagement/willingness to participate could be heightened through dance. Although it should be pointed out that nine of the fifteen surveyed skills received over 60% support from non-dance familiars, the fact that non-dance educators did not show unanimous belief in the ability of these top-ranked skills to be strengthened through dance education is indicative of future work that needs to be done to help dance continue to flourish in the public-school setting. Suggestions for future work will be briefly outlined in the conclusion of this study.

Barriers to Growth of Dance Education

One of the concluding questions on both groups' surveys asked, "What barriers do you feel exist when it comes to incorporating dance education within the public-school system?" Qualitative analysis of the answers to this open-ended question revealed four major themes that

were expressed by participants in both groups: educational priorities, lack of understanding, funding, and the structure of dance classes in public schools.

Educational Priorities

A number of participants commented on the way in which educational priorities affect a school's views on dance. One non-dance familiar noted,

> I think the school system doesn't always think that dance or other arts are as important as they are. Many people think of them as extra curriculars when in actuality they are extremely useful for teaching soft skills, interpersonal skills, and creativity — all of which are necessary in most fields today.

Another non-dance familiar believed that dance is often considered an extracurricular or "special" within public schools, and as such, the time spent in the extracurricular classes becomes disposable when core content needs to be reinforced: "…if a child has fallen behind academically, we often consider the minutes spent on specials as extra-curricular and the child can use those minutes to be engaged in academic work to improve standardized test scores." As one dance educator succinctly put it, "So much emphasis is placed on scoring core-subjects and not on catering to the entirety of the student."

Lack of Understanding

Many participants also commented that they believe a severe lack of understanding impedes the ability of dance to flourish in the public-school system. One non-dance familiar noted that dance "…is viewed as something that 'everyone can do,' so why spend more time going in depth with history, technique and performance? It's the tragedy of most arts."

Many dance educators agreed with this sentiment. One stated, "Administrators and other teachers do not understand the importance of dance education and how students can embrace other academic knowledge through embodying the content." Another dance educator supported this statement and pointed out that it is hard for an area of study to garner support if

administrators do not take the time to understand the value of the subject: “Without an administration that understands or at the very least supports a dance program, it is easily brushed aside.”

Yet another participant pointed out that lack of understanding takes place at all levels. This non-dance familiar indicated students may be reluctant to enroll in dance courses, thus hindering the growth of dance as an area of study, if they cannot move beyond the stereotypes that are often associated with dance, such as the notion that one must be romantically involved with a dance partner or that dance is only a female art form.

Funding

Participants in both groups noted that funding can hinder the growth of dance education, with a lack of funding leading to an inability to provide appropriate dance space, flooring, or even trained faculty to teach dance. One dance teacher spoke from personal experience, explaining how a lack of funding forced them to need to modify instruction in a way that impacted instruction. This participant said, “Dance teachers are not fully equipped with appropriate supplies, resources to fully engage in all forms of dance. For example, my dance room does not have ballet bars so I tend to teach barre work with my students standing against the wall.” Yet another dance teacher pointed out that funding issues can affect such aspects as a program[’s] costume budget; without sufficient costumes and other production elements, a dance program can come across as less professional and unworthy of further investment.

Structure of Dance Classes

A final barrier cited by a number of participants, namely dance educators, was the actual structure and current status of dance classes in the public-school system. One dance educator commented that a lack of detailed and varied curriculum makes it difficult to engage students

and help push for the growth of a school's dance program, claiming there is "…not enough curriculum available to me that is interesting to the kids and not just ancient folk dances." Yet another dance educator commented on the way in which students are often sorted into dance classes, noting, "Mixed level classes are a significant challenge within the public-school system." Unlike core content areas like math and science, where students progress from one level to the next in a specified order and only after showing proficiency in their current course, dance students are often assigned to classes based not on experience or ability, but on scheduling availability. In this sense, mixed level classes can prevent students from achieving the attention and growth they deserve, which can go on to affect the quality of products or performances produced by dance teachers. Such issues as lack of appropriate curriculum, support, and class placement can occupy a great deal of a dancer educator's time and attention, making it difficult for dance teachers to focus on growth of their programs.

Hope for the Future of Dance Education

This study aimed to identify discrepancies between the viewpoints of non-dance familiars and dance educators, and to identify potential steps that might be taken in order to increase the prevalence of dance in public schools. As such, the researcher felt it was important to ask all participants in the non-dance familiar group if they would like to see dance classes offered in their own schools. This question was replaced on the dance educator survey with the following question: Do you feel your school district understands and supports your endeavors as a Dance teacher? In both cases, participants were asked to briefly justify their answers.

Desired Growth

All of the surveyed non-dance familiars stated they would like to see dance offerings added or increased in their schools. Various reasons were cited to support the addition of dance

to the curriculum. For example, one participant stated that dance classes would be able to assist in breaking down perceived barriers between students, while another pointed out that dance classes could provide students with a chance to simply have fun, something students do not often get to do in their other classes. Some participants touched on the ability of dance to help strengthen other skills taught in the traditional classroom. As one non-dance familiar replied, "Part of being able to think for yourself is having a creative outlet that allows you to synthesize unique ideas, and I believe dance classes and other creative arts classes create that window for students."

Other participants spoke from personal experience, explaining how they had personally benefitted from exposure to dance in grade school. One explained,

> I grew so much, academically and socially, dancing as I grew up. Without dance, I would not have been the high achiever I am; that helped me to be successful in my current field. I built friendships and had responsibilities that I did not see in many of my friends' sports or clubs they joined. Sparking an interest in dance sparks a life-long love for the performing arts that can be a haven for many children with trauma. I believe if we offered dance as a specials time, we would see a decrease in behaviors during academic time, therefore raising our test scores and lowering the anxiety of children in our classrooms.

Another participant expressed a similar sentiment, writing, "To be able to synchronously move with your friends and have it look good?! It was the best. I don't remember much of P.E in high school, but I definitely remember when we did square dancing." This participant, along with several others, felt that dance should be offered in schools regardless of its connection to academic skills, but simply for the joy and pleasure the art form could bring to students.

Current Levels of Support Received

When asked if they felt supported in their teaching endeavors, seven of the nine dance educators (or 77.78%) said yes, while the remaining two participants (22.22%) said no. One dance educator commented their district supported all students in finding "… their identity in the

school, whether that be in the arts or academics. They make a point to highlight the dance program just as they do other subjects or activities." Another dance educator explained that after their school district studied the achievements of dance students compared to their non-dance peers over multiple decades, they began to funnel greater levels of support to the district's dance classes, which seemed to have a clear link to overall academic achievement. Yet another participant stated that while their administrators did not have an in-depth understanding of dance, they respected that dance represented a beneficial part of the school culture, and as such, the administrators were always willing to support their dance teachers as needed.

Those who expressed they did not feel supported in the current teaching role tended to cite the lack of administrative support and understanding. As one dance educator wrote,

> I believe that school districts have a minor understanding of what dance is, but there is such a wide gap in the linking of resources and supplies. I do believe that more fine art director positions do need to have more than one person in leadership. In Texas [the participant's current location], the majority of the leadership positions are being directed by former band directors.

While there is certainly work to be done to ensure that all dance educators feel supported in their workplace environment and teaching endeavors, the fact that the vast majority of dance educators reported being supported in their current positions is a positive sign. Potential steps to help increase the prevalence of dance and appreciation of dance educators in the public-school system will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate perceived barriers preventing dance from being offered more regularly in American public schools, as well as to identify discrepancies in the ways in which dance educators and non-dance educators working in the public-school sector view dance and its value to education. The study involved nine dance educators and twelve non--dance familiars, all of whom completed a survey focused on dance in education and perceptions regarding twenty-first century skills. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative analysis to analyze the data. At the time of this thesis, no previous published efforts to dissect discrepancies in the viewpoints between dance educators and non-dance educators in order to identify barriers to the growth of dance education in public-schools had been found by the researcher.

The study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

Q1 What barriers or objections exist when it comes to incorporating dance within the public-school setting?

Q2 What discrepancies exist between the viewpoints of dance educators and non-dance familiars when it comes to dance and its value within the public education system?

Q3 What specific steps can be taken to highlight the importance of dance education in the public-school setting?

In this chapter, the researcher discusses implications of the study, limitations, and recommendations for further research. This research suggested that while dance educators and non-dance familiars agreed concerning their desire to see dance grow within the public education

system, and while the two groups largely agreed on the comparative importance of twenty-first century skills as they related to future student successes, the two participant parties did not agree entirely on the skills dance education could help strengthen among students. In general, dance educators were more liberal in their identification of twenty-first century skills that could be strengthened through regular participation in dance than their non-dance familiars. Potential reasons behind this difference in skill designation, as well as other implications, will be outlined below.

Implications of the Study

For clarity, the implications of the data analysis presented in the previous chapter were organized by the researcher based on the research questions outlined above. The implications are detailed below in the following paragraphs.

Research Question One

The first research question surrounded barriers and objections preventing dance classes from being more commonly offered in the public-school setting. As explained previously, none of the surveyed participants in either group expressed any objections to the addition of dance to their school's curriculum; all participants stated they would like to see dance offerings added or expanded upon in their school. These findings seem to indicate that lack of interest or support among faculty should not pose a barrier to the future incorporation of dance in public-schools. Of course, certain limitations must be considered when analyzing this supposition; limitations of this study will be discussed later in this chapter.

Four overarching barriers to the growth of dance education were identified by the survey participants; these barriers included educational priorities, lack of understanding, funding, and the structure of dance classes in public schools. While non-dance educators and dance educators

alike cited the first three items as barriers to the advancement of dance in the public-school setting, only dance educators remarked on the current expected structure of dance classes in public schools. This is likely because dance educators are inherently more familiar with the curriculum, expectations, and structure of dance classes in public schools, so they would be much more likely to identify weak components within the current structuring of public-school dance classes than would a science or math teacher.

Identification of perceived barriers to the growth of dance education is crucial. The dance community cannot hope to supersede barriers to growth or advocate for greater inclusion of dance in the public-school sector without knowing the specific barriers that must be considered. The researcher will discuss potential avenues for future change and the addressing of the above identified barriers in the discussion of the third research question.

Research Question Two

The second research question, as outlined above, required the researcher to identify discrepancies between dance educators and non-dance familiars concerning dance and its value within the public-education system. While dance educators and non-dance familiars tended to agree on a great number of items (as discussed in the prior chapter), two primary areas of disagreement were found through quantitative analysis of the survey data. Differences in beliefs on the relative importance of twenty-first century skills and discrepancies concerning skills that may be strengthened through dance education, along with possible rationales for these disparities, will be discussed in greater detail below.

Discrepancies Concerning Relative Importance of Twenty-First Century Skills

In the discussion chapter, the researcher noted the dance educators and non-dance educators were in very close agreement on the relative importance of twenty-first century skills, except when it came to the ranking of four skills. In most cases, these discrepancies seem attributable to differing outlooks required of the differing careers held by the participants in each group. Still, these discrepancies, and possible reasons to explain differences in rankings across the two groups, will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Quantitative analysis revealed dance educators felt collaboration to be the second most important skill, while non-dance familiars placed this skill as sixth most important. This is likely because the field of dance requires a greater level of collaboration than most other areas of study (such as dancers working in tandem with each other to execute a lift, or choreographers collaborating with lighting and sound technicians to produce a piece). In other words, the inherent collaborative nature of their subject may have caused dance educators to view collaboration as also being fundamentally important to overall success in life.

Similarly, the skill of initiative/self-motivation was ranked as fourth most important by dance educators, but as seventh most important by non-dance familiars. Though there is no definitive explanation for this difference, the performative nature of dance and the need to always be actively participating in movement in a dance class may have skewed their views on the overall importance of initiative and self-motivation; after all, one cannot succeed in dance unless both their body and mind are invested in the process. Again, the dance educators likely based their ranking of this skill on their experience in their own career field, while the non-dance educators likely found self-motivation to be less important to their own educational fields, where

group discussions and worksheets requiring rote memory allow students to succeed without needing the same level of initiative from both the body and mind.

When considering the skill of creativity/imagination, non-dance educators viewed this skill to be second most important by non-dance familiars and sixth most important by dance educators. While one might think educators of dance, an art form structured around artistic interpretation and creativity, would have ranked creativity/imagination higher than non-dance familiars, a possible explanation may be found in the way in which the two participant groups view the need to prepare students for successful entry into the work force. As of late, many career pathways advertise the need to be a creative problem-solver. In order to prepare the youth of today to solve the problems of the future, non-dance familiars may feel it is their responsibility to teach students to think creatively. On the other hand, dance educators may have been thinking of ways in which to best prepare students to ace a dance audition or to begin a career in the performance world. To be hired by a dance company, a dancer must be able to quickly pick up and replicate choreography while showing they can assimilate into the world of a director or choreographer's vision. This being said, creativity may be seen as less important by dance educators, who may be focused on raising compliant, technically proficient, and well-versed dancers.

The final discrepancy between dance educators and non-dance familiars concerned the skill of engagement/willingness to participate (ranked eighth by dance educators and fourth by non-dance familiars). Though a plethora of reasons could support this difference in rankings, one potential explanation may again be found in the way in which the two participant groups view success in their own classrooms. In traditional academic classrooms, teachers often look for students who are engaged, willing to contribute answers in class or participate in group

discussions. In other words, engagement and participation allows a student to show mastery of a topic, and thus potential for success. However, things work slightly differently in the dance classroom. While dance teachers likely value engagement among their students, they probably also recognize that much of success in dance is based on self-motivation or independent learning, rather than group participation and contributions to group dynamics. To master choreography or execute a difficult step, a dancer will often retreat into themselves in order to internally focus on the step. For example, while a class is going over a combination (even in the professional world of dance), a senior dancer who has already memorized the combination may choose to focus on the execution of a particularly difficult movement within the combination, rather than participate in the full-group review. This behavior is often seen as acceptable within the dance world, because dancers commonly recognize that each dancer learns differently, and that success requires an individual to focus on what works best for him or her, rather than on being actively engaged in the movement exploration by all throughout the entirety of the lesson.

Of course, it should be noted that the above interpretations are conjectures made by the researcher, and it would be beneficial to conduct research to further substantiate these theories, as will be discussed in the recommendations for future research. However, the researcher's findings that discrepancies exist between dance educators and non-familiars regarding the relative value of twenty-first century skills does merit further thought, as these discrepancies must be recognized by all parties if dance is to find a stronger footing in the world of public education. Discussion of further actions to address these discrepancies may be found below, in the acknowledgment of the third research question.

Discrepancies Concerning Skills Strengthened Through Dance

In the discussion chapter, the researcher noted dance educators tended to show a significantly greater level of belief in the ability of dance to strengthen various twenty-first century skills than their non-dance peers. In particular, over forty percent more dance educators than non-dance familiars believed the following skills could be strengthened through regular participation in dance classes: ability to adapt to a given situation, empathy, information literacy, media literacy, productivity, and technology literacy. While it is important to note the findings resulting from this study indicated that at least some non-dance participants felt each of the various twenty-first century skills could be strengthened through participation in dance, the fact that dance educators felt much more strongly about the ability of the skills to be strengthened through dance (for example, 75% of dance educators felt technology literacy could be enhanced through dance, while only 16.67% of non-dance familiars acknowledged that dance could assist in teaching technology literacy).

Likely explanations for these differences in beliefs results from different understandings of what is covered in a typical public-school dance course. As mentioned above, very few non-dance familiars felt technology literacy could be taught through dance. This is likely because, when viewing a dance performance, non-dance familiars just see the final product of bodies moving on stage, and do not fully consider all the work leading up to the performance. On the other hand, a dance educator knows their students have had to interact with technology in a variety of ways to put on their performance, from researching music and sources of inspiration, to editing music, to understanding how sound and lighting work within the theater, to potentially even using electronic applications to map out formations for a dance. Indeed, a dance educator would likely be more cognizant of the ways in which dance requires students to become

technologically literate than a non-dance educator. The same may likely be said for the other twenty-first skills that were selected more frequently by dance educators than non-dance familiars as being able to be strengthened through participation in dance.

On the other hand, it is important to note that these discrepancies in viewpoints may also have resulted from a somewhat inflated sense of importance of dance on the part of the dance educators. All human beings are inherently biased, and though the researcher hoped all participants would put biases aside when completing the surveys, it is possible that the dance educators' strong feelings about the power of their craft to change lives for the better led this large number of participants in this group to state dance had the ability to teach virtually all twenty-first century skills.

Research Question Three

The inspiration for this study was largely rooted in the researcher's personal observation that dance offerings were lacking in many public-school settings. With this said, the researcher aspired to put together a series of potential steps that could be taken to help highlight the importance of dance within the public-school setting. The researcher felt one crucial step in helping to outline a path to greater future public-school dance offerings was to identify barriers that needed to be addressed in order to allow dance to be offered more frequently. As stated above, the four main barriers cited in this study were educational priorities, lack of understanding, funding, and the structure of dance classes in public schools. Though it may take time, it would seem these barriers could start to be broken down through open conversations with administrators and state officials. Parents, students, and dance teachers need to reach out to educational leaders about the need to improve funding and educate the overall populace on the benefits of dance. Educating individuals on the benefits of dance will (hopefully) allow

educational leaders to reassess educational priorities and the allocation of time in the school day. With enough open dialogue and advancement of dance education, the researcher believes it would be possible for dance to make the move from being considered an extra-curricular or "special" class to an important area of study that could not be infringed upon to make room for enrichment in "core" academic classes.

Advocating for the future of dance education is no easy task, but it is the researcher's hope that some of the areas of discrepancy outlined above serve as starting points for future advocacy efforts. Open conversations need to be held between dance educators and non-dance educators to help each group understand why the other group holds certain twenty-first century skills in higher value than others. Additionally, dance educators need to be able to clearly explain and illustrate how the various twenty-first century skills may be taught through dance. Perhaps by allowing non-dance familiars to observe dance classes on an ongoing basis, or even by allowing interested parties to take dance classes themselves, dance educators can help non-dance familiars see the immense number of skills dance classes can help teach and strengthen. Ideally, once these non-dance educators were able to witness the benefits of dance and dance's relationship to crucial twenty-first century skills firsthand, these non-dance educators would become allies in the quest for greater dance offerings in public schools.

Needless to say, a great deal of this work must fall upon dance educators. No one understands the benefits of dance better than those who engage with it on a day-to-day basis, and no one is better equipped to better address the weaknesses in the current structure of public-school dance classes than those who lead dance classes day after day and year after year. While it is great for dance educators to focus on their own students and departments, the ability of dance educators to make a lasting impact on the future of public-school dance education should not be

overlooked. Similarly, the majority of dance educators in this study stated they felt supported by their districts in the endeavors as dance teachers, but these dance teachers must take it upon themselves to ensure that those dance teachers who do not feel heard or seen by their supervisors are equipped with the knowledge and tools to better advocate for themselves and their programs.

Limitations of the Study

Though this study does propose a number of discrepancies warranting future discussion between dance educators and non-dance familiars, it is important to discuss a number of limitations of the study. One such limitation may be found in the small participant pool. This study consisted of nine dance educators and twelve non-dance familiars. Furthermore, a large number of participants were personally connected to the researcher or were connected to acquaintances of the researcher who were also dance educators. Since many of the participants knew an individual personally involved in the dance field, they may have had a more positive view of dance and its potential benefits in the public-school setting. Repeating this study with a larger pool of participants in the future would help to confirm and identify stronger trends in the data, while hopefully eliminating any potential biases from dance-adjacent parties.

It is also crucial to note that the research instruments used in this study were not tested for reliability or validity. The research instruments had not been previously used by other researchers; while the researcher made every effort to avoid biases, it is possible that a degree of bias made its way into the survey questions. Finally, all data were collected, compiled, and analyzed by the researcher. In a future repetition of this study, other researchers should be asked to collect and analyze data to help verify the conclusions stated above.

Comparison to Other Research

This study may be distinguished from others by its focus on the comparison of views of dance educators and non-dance familiars. However, it is important to acknowledge several previous studies focusing on similar research content.

One such study of note is Minton and Hofmeister's "The International Baccalaureate Dance Programme: Learning Skills for Life in the 21st Century," which is mentioned in chapter two of this thesis. This study looked at research surrounding twenty-first century skills in dance. As discussed previously, Minton and Hofmeister observed groups of International Baccalaureate (IB) Dance students in class and at a dance concert. Qualitative analysis of the compiled data indicated dance helped students develop such twenty-first century skills as accountability, social responsibility, communication, collaboration, creativity, self-motivation and direction, critical thinking, and flexibility and adaptability. Though the study upon which this paper is written did not involve students or the observation of dance classes, many of the twenty-first century skills identified by Minton and Hofmeister as being connected to experiences in dance also played a strong role in this study.

The current study aimed to propose a series of "next steps" to be taken by dance advocates based upon barriers and discrepancies identified throughout this study. However, it is important to note the researcher is far from a pioneer in the field of dance advocacy. Perhaps the most similar research to this study can be found in Bonbright's "Threats to Dance Education: Our Field at Risk." As described in chapter two of this study, Bonbright noted four primary threats to the field of dance education, including uniformity within dance education, the current lack of equity and access to dance, a strong lack of data regarding dance education, and a need to come up with a unified definition and method of teaching dance education. Bonbright

recommended dance educators, administrators, and state officials look at their own programs to ensure their schools were delivering the best and most appropriate dance instruction possible. Bonbright's sentiment that change and advocacy must start from within and be initiated by dance educators was heavily echoed throughout this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Very little research regarding discrepancies between the viewpoints of dance educators and non-dance familiars on the values of dance and its place in public-education exists, and as such, this study illuminated many potential areas of future research.

It would be highly beneficial to repeat this study with a larger pool of participants and under the guidance of a different researcher to help verify or refute the findings of this study. This study was initially crafted to include an interview portion following the survey, but due to COVID-related issues and participant time constraints, this portion of the study was eliminated. It would be interesting to repeat this study with the interview portion, as interviews could help verify or refute some of the researcher's interpretations. For example, interviews could help illuminate the participants' reasons behind their rankings, or to help explain their choice of skills that could be strengthened through participation in dance.

Furthermore, an in-depth study of current advocacy efforts for dance education in the public-school sector could help verify the efficacy of some of the potential solutions proposed by this study. Namely, the researcher suggested several areas of conversation that should be held between dance educators and non-dance familiars. It would be immensely beneficial to have non-dance familiars (non-dance educators, members of the general populace, and educational leaders alike) take a pre-survey concerning their views on dance, engage in a guided dialogue concerning dance or take a series of dance classes, and then take a post-survey to track how their

views on the value of dance changed or did not change after exposure to or discussion around dance.

Finally, future dance advocacy efforts would benefit from an in-depth study of the factors that make the dance programs in some school districts flourish, while others never take off the ground or remain stagnate. This sort of study would likely need to consist of both a survey and interviews with various superintendents, instructional supervisors for dance, and dance educators, as well as an overview of the curriculum utilized by each district. The goal of this research would be to compile data on the similarities and differences in the ways in which different dance departments operate to varying levels of success.

Summary

This research provided a starting point for understanding the various discrepancies and barriers that may prevent dance from being more commonly offered in the public-school system. This study revealed that while dance educators and non-dance familiars share similar views on the importance of many twenty-first century skills that are taught in the classroom, these two parties are not always unified in their views on dance's ability to teach these skills. Additionally, and encouragingly, this study highlighted a unanimous desire among participants for dance to be offered in more public schools. Finally, this study highlighted several necessary areas of future discussion to help secure a more solid place for dance within the public-school system.

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APPENDIX A

APPROVAL LETTER FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Institutional Review Board

Date:	11/17/2020
Principal Investigator:	Bri Miller
Committee Action:	**IRB EXEMPT DETERMINATION – New Protocol**
Action Date:	11/17/2020
Protocol Number:	2010012459
Protocol Title:	Barriers to Dance Education: An Exploration into the Beliefs of Dance Educators and Non-Familiars on Dance and its Place in the Public-School System
Expiration Date:	

The University of Northern Colorado Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol and determined your project to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.104(d)(702) for research involving

Category 2 (2018): EDUCATIONAL TESTS, SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, OR OBSERVATIONS OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR. Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7).

You may begin conducting your research as outlined in your protocol. Your study does not require further review from the IRB, unless changes need to be made to your approved protocol.

As the Principal Investigator (PI), you are still responsible for contacting the UNC IRB office if and when:

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Institutional Review Board

- You wish to deviate from the described protocol and would like to formally submit a modification request. Prior IRB approval must be obtained before any changes can be implemented (except to eliminate an immediate hazard to research participants).
- You make changes to the research personnel working on this study (add or drop research staff on this protocol).
- At the end of the study or before you leave The University of Northern Colorado and are no longer a student or employee, to request your protocol be closed. *You cannot continue to reference UNC on any documents (including the informed consent form) or conduct the study under the auspices of UNC if you are no longer a student/employee of this university.
- You have received or have been made aware of any complaints, problems, or adverse events that are related or possibly related to participation in the research.

If you have any questions, please contact the Research Compliance Manager, Nicole Morse, at 970-351-1910 or via e-mail at nicole.morse@unco.edu. Additional information concerning the requirements for the protection of human subjects may be found at the Office of Human Research Protection website - http://hhs.gov/ohrp/ and https://www.unco.edu/research/research-integrity-and-compliance/institutional-review-board/.

Sincerely,

Nicole Morse
Research Compliance Manager

University of Northern Colorado: FWA00000784

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
DANCE EDUCATORS

Thesis Title: Barriers to Dance Education: An Exploration into the Beliefs of Dance Educators and Non-Familiars on Dance and its Place in the Public-School System

Researcher: Bri Michelle Miller, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

Email: levy0457@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor: Dr. Sandra Minton, University of Northern Colorado, sandra.minton@unco.edu

You are being asked to take part in a research study revolving around specific factors and discrepancies that prevent dance from being commonly offered in the public-school setting. You will be asked to complete an electronic survey detailing your views on dance education and its perceived benefits within the public-school system, as well as barriers to its inclusion among many schools' course offerings. This survey will take twenty to thirty minutes to complete in its entirety. At a secondary date, following the completion of your survey, you will participate in a virtual follow-up interview (approximately thirty minutes in length) to further explore and clarify your views as they are expressed through your survey. This interview will be audio recorded.

What the study is about: The aim of this research is to discover answers to the following three questions: (1) What barriers or objections exist when it comes to incorporating dance within the public-school setting? (2) What discrepancies exist between the viewpoints of dance educators and administrators/non-dance familiars when it comes to dance and its value within the public education system? (3) What specific steps can be taken to highlight the importance of dance education in the public-school setting?

Analysis of the barriers that prevent dance classes from being commonly offered in the public-school system and comparison of the viewpoints of dance familiars and non-familiars will allow the researcher to pinpoint specific areas of disagreement or differing viewpoints between dance proponents and school officials. This, in turn, will allow the researcher to suggest potential ways in which these disagreements and obstacles may be assuaged in order to better advocate for the inclusion of dance education among the course offerings of public-schools.

Risks: The risks and discomforts inherent in this study are no greater than those normally encountered while using the computer or while engaging in conversation.

0025 Kepner Hall, Campus Box 143, Greeley, CO 80639 | Telephone: 970-351-1910 | Fax: 970-351-1934

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Your answers will be confidential. Every effort will be made to protect your identity. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that is made public, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. A code system will be used to identify all participant responses. No actual names will be used; each participant will be assigned a number, and these participant numbers will be used in all reports. The goal of the research is to simply document perceived benefits of dance education and potential barriers that prevent the inclusion of dance among regular course offerings within the public-school system. All documents pertaining to this study will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer, as well as on an external drive that will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. In July of 2021, all signed consent forms pertaining to this study will be hand-delivered by the researcher to the office of Christy O'Connell-Black, Dance Education MA Coordinator for the University of Northern Colorado; thereafter, all documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet in Crabbe Hall, room 308. All documents connected with this study will be destroyed after three years following the completion of the thesis.

Taking part is voluntary: All participation in this study is voluntary.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Bri Michelle Miller. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me using the information listed above. Please retain one copy of this letter for your records.
Thank you for assisting in this research.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

_____

Your electronic signature

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UNIVERSITY OF
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CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
NON-DANCE EDUCATORS

Thesis Title: Barriers to Dance Education: An Exploration into the Beliefs of Dance Educators and Non-Familiars on Dance and its Place in the Public-School System

Researcher: Bri Michelle Miller, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

Email: levy0457@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor: Dr. Sandra Minton, University of Northern Colorado, sandra.minton@unco.edu

You are being asked to take part in a research study revolving around specific factors and discrepancies that prevent dance from being commonly offered in the public-school setting. You will be asked to complete an electronic survey detailing your views on dance education and its perceived benefits within the public-school system, as well as barriers to its inclusion among many schools' course offerings. This survey will take twenty to thirty minutes to complete in its entirety. At a secondary date, following the completion of your survey, you will participate in a virtual follow-up interview (approximately thirty minutes in length) to further explore and clarify your views as they are expressed through your survey. This interview will be audio recorded.

What the study is about: The aim of this research is to discover answers to the following three questions: (1) What barriers or objections exist when it comes to incorporating dance within the public-school setting? (2) What discrepancies exist between the viewpoints of dance educators and non-dance familiars when it comes to dance and its value within the public education system? (3) What specific steps can be taken to highlight the importance of dance education in the public-school setting?

Analysis of the barriers that prevent dance classes from being commonly offered in the public-school system and comparison of the viewpoints of dance familiars and non-familiars will allow the researcher to pinpoint specific areas of disagreement or differing viewpoints between dance proponents and non-dance educators. This, in turn, will allow the researcher to suggest potential ways in which these disagreements and obstacles may be assuaged in order to better advocate for the inclusion of dance education among the course offerings of public-schools.

Risks: The risks and discomforts inherent in this study are no greater than those normally encountered while using the computer or while engaging in conversation.

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NORTHERN COLORADO

Your answers will be confidential. Every effort will be made to protect your identity. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that is made public, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. A code system will be used to identify all participant responses. No actual names will be used; each participant will be assigned a number, and these participant numbers will be used in all reports. The goal of the research is to simply document perceived benefits of dance education and potential barriers that prevent the inclusion of dance among regular course offerings within the public-school system. All documents pertaining to this study will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer, as well as on an external drive that will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. In July of 2021, all signed consent forms pertaining to this study will be hand-delivered by the researcher to the office of Christy O'Connell-Black, Dance Education MA Coordinator for the University of Northern Colorado; thereafter, all documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet in Crabbe Hall, room 308. All documents connected with this study will be destroyed after three years following the completion of the thesis.

Taking part is voluntary: All participation in this study is voluntary.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Bri Michelle Miller. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me using the information listed above. Please retain one copy of this letter for your records.
Thank you for assisting in this research.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

_____
Your electronic signature

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APPENDIX C

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Dance Educator Survey

Participant Code

_____

Please accurately and honestly respond to each of the following questions, checking all answers that apply to your situation.

Q1 I understand and acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in research for a graduate thesis. I understand that my identity and all identifying information will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher.

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q2 What is your age?

- ○ 18-24 years old (1)
- ○ 25-34 years old (2)
- ○ 35-44 years old (3)
- ○ 45-54 years old (4)
- ○ 55-64 years old (5)
- ○ 65 years or older (6)

Q3 What is your current position?

- ○ Elementary school Dance teacher (public school) (1)
- ○ Middle school Dance teacher (public school) (4)
- ○ High school Dance teacher (public school) (2)
- ○ Other (please describe below) (3)

Q4 If you selected "Other" for the previous question, please describe your current position. Otherwise, please write N/A.

_____

Q5 How many years have you worked in the public-school system (all positions)?

- ○ 0-3 years (1)
- ○ 4-6 years (2)
- ○ 7-9 years (3)
- ○ 10-12 years (4)
- ○ 13-15 years (5)
- ○ 16 years or more (6)

Q6 In total, how many years have you worked in as a dance teacher in the public-school system? Please note, this question is asking for the sum of years in a dance position- if you have worked in the same position at multiple schools, please count all your years of experience.

- ○ 0-3 years (1)
- ○ 4-6 years (2)
- ○ 7-9 years (3)
- ○ 10-12 years (4)
- ○ 13-15 years (5)
- ○ 16 years or more (6)

Q7 In which region of the U.S. do you currently work?

- ○ Northeast (1)
- ○ South (2)
- ○ Midwest (3)
- ○ West (4)

Q8 Which of the following best describes your current position?

- ○ I only teach Dance. (1)
- ○ I teach Dance in addition to another subject. (2)
- ○ I teach Physical Education and teach several sections of Dance; these classes are offered as electives. (3)
- ○ Other (please describe below) (4)

Q9 If you selected "Other" for the previous question, please explain. Otherwise, please write N/A.

_____

Q10 Which of the following skills or abilities (if any) do you believe can be strengthened through participation in regular dance classes?

- [ ] Ability to Adapt to a Given Situation (14)
- [ ] Collaboration (1)
- [ ] Communication/Social Skills (2)
- [ ] Creativity/Imagination (3)
- [ ] Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving (4)
- [ ] Empathy (5)
- [ ] Engagement/Willingness to Actively Participate (15)
- [ ] Information Literacy (6)
- [ ] Initiative/Self-Motivation (7)
- [ ] Leadership (8)
- [ ] Media Literacy (9)
- [ ] Observation of Details (17)
- [ ] Physical Skills/Body Awareness (16)
- [ ] Productivity (10)
- [ ] Social Skills (11)

☐ Technology Literacy (12)

☐ None of the above (13)

Q11 Out of the skills listed above, select the 10 skills you believe are most important when it comes to student success. Rank these skills in order from most important to least important by dragging and dropping each option into the appropriate order, with the option you list as 1 being most important, and 10 as least important.

_____ Ability to Adapt to a Given Situation (13)
_____ Collaboration (1)
_____ Communication/Social Skills (2)
_____ Creativity/Imagination (3)
_____ Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving (4)
_____ Empathy (14)
_____ Engagement/Willingness to Actively Participate (5)
_____ Information Literacy (6)
_____ Initiative/Self-Motivation (7)
_____ Leadership (8)
_____ Media Literacy (9)
_____ Memory (11)
_____ Observation of Details (16)
_____ Physical Skills/Body Awareness (15)
_____ Productivity (10)
_____ Technology Literacy (12)

Q12 Briefly explain why you ranked the skills as you did for the previous question.

_____

Q13 What barriers do you feel exist when it comes to incorporating dance education within the public-school system?

_____

Q14 Do you feel your school district understands and supports your endeavors as a Dance teacher?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q15 Explain your answer to the previous question.

_____

Q16 Please add any additional comments.

_____

Non-Dance Educator Survey

Participant Code

_____

Please accurately and honestly respond to each of the following questions, checking all answers that apply to your situation.

Q1 I understand and acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in research for a graduate thesis. I understand that my identity and all identifying information will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher.

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q2 What is your age?

- ○ 18-24 years old (1)
- ○ 25-34 years old (2)
- ○ 35-44 years old (3)
- ○ 45-54 years old (4)
- ○ 55-64 years old (5)
- ○ 65 years or older (6)

Q3 What is your current position?

- ○ Elementary school principal (public school) (1)
- ○ Elementary school assistant principal (public school) (2)
- ○ Elementary school teacher (please indicate grade/subject below) (6)
- ○ Secondary school principal (public school) (3)
- ○ Secondary school assistant principal (public school) (4)
- ○ Secondary school teacher (please indicate grade/subject below) (7)
- ○ School district administrator/Other (please describe below) (5)

Q4 If you selected "Elementary school teacher" or "Secondary school teacher" for the previous question, please provide details regarding grade and subject below. If you selected "Other" for the previous question, please describe your current position. Otherwise, please write N/A.

_____

Q5 How many years have you worked in the public-school system (all positions)?

- ○ 0-3 years (1)
- ○ 4-6 years (2)
- ○ 7-9 years (3)
- ○ 10-12 years (4)
- ○ 13-15 years (5)
- ○ 16 years or more (6)

Q6 In total, how many years have you worked in your current position?

- ○ 0-3 years (1)
- ○ 4-6 years (2)
- ○ 7-9 years (3)
- ○ 10-12 years (4)
- ○ 13-15 years (5)
- ○ 16 years or more (6)

Q7 In which region of the U.S. do you currently work?

- ○ Northeast (1)
- ○ South (2)
- ○ Midwest (3)
- ○ West (4)

Q8 Have you ever studied dance?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q9 If you answered “Yes” to the previous question, explain what type of dance you studied, where you studied (public-school, private studio, fitness center, etc.), and for how long you studied dance. If you answered "No" to the previous question, please write N/A.

_____

Q10 Does your current school offer Dance classes?

- ○ Yes, we have a Dance teacher who only teaches dance. (1)
- ○ Yes, we have a Dance teacher who teaches dance in addition to another subject or subjects. (2)
- ○ Yes, our Physical Education teacher(s) offer Dance as an elective. (3)
- ○ No, but our Physical Education teacher(s) incorporates occasional dance-based days or units into their curriculum. (4)
- ○ No, we do not offer Dance classes in any form. (5)

Q11 Which of the following skills or abilities (if any) do you believe can be strengthened through participation in regular dance classes?

- [ ] Ability to Adapt to a Given Situation (14)
- [ ] Collaboration (1)
- [ ] Communication/Social Skills (2)
- [ ] Creativity/Imagination (3)
- [ ] Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving (4)
- [ ] Empathy (15)
- [ ] Engagement/Willingness to Actively Participate (16)
- [ ] Information Literacy (6)
- [ ] Initiative/Self-Motivation (7)
- [ ] Leadership (8)
- [ ] Media Literacy (9)
- [ ] Memory (11)
- [ ] Observation of Details (18)
- [ ] Physical Skills/Body Awareness (17)
- [ ] Productivity (10)

☐ Technology Literacy (12)

☐ None of the above (13)

Q12 Out of the skills listed above, select the 10 skills you believe are most important when it comes to student success. Rank these skills in order from most important to least important by dragging and dropping each option into the appropriate order, with the option you list as 1 being most important, and 10 as least important.

_____ Ability to Adapt to a Given Situation (13)
_____ Collaboration (1)
_____ Communication/Social Skills (2)
_____ Creativity/Imagination (3)
_____ Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving (4)
_____ Empathy (14)
_____ Engagement/Willingness to Actively Participate (5)
_____ Information Literacy (6)
_____ Initiative/Self-Motivation (7)
_____ Leadership (8)
_____ Media Literacy (9)
_____ Memory (11)
_____ Observation of Details (15)
_____ Physical Skills/Body Awareness (16)
_____ Productivity (10)
_____ Technology Literacy (12)

Q13 Briefly explain why you ranked the skills as you did for the previous question.

_____

Q14 What barriers do you feel exist when it comes to incorporating dance education within the public-school system?

_____

Q15 Would you like to see dance classes offered at your school?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q16 Explain your answer to the previous question.

_____

Q17 Please add any additional comments.

_____

APPENDIX D

MATERIALS USED ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADVERTISE STUDY

The following text was also posted to social media:

As many of you know, I am currently pursuing my Master's degree in Dance Education at the University of Northern Colorado. In line with the requirements for my program, I am working on my thesis and would like to invite any interested parties to participate in in my research study, which will investigate the specific factors and discrepancies that prevent dance from being commonly offered in the public-school setting.

Who may participate? If you currently work as a public-school administrator (principal, assistant principal, or district official) or a public-school educator (dance or otherwise, or if you have worked in any of these positions in the past, you are eligible to participate.

What will your participation entail? If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an electronic survey (20-30 minutes) detailing your views on dance education and its perceived benefits within the public-school system, as well as barriers to its inclusion among many schools' course offerings. At a secondary date, following the completion of your survey, you will be asked to participate in an optional virtual follow-up interview (approximately 30 minutes) to further explore and clarify your views as they are expressed through your survey. I would like to audio record your interview so that your responses may be transcribed and used to provide further insight into the responses obtained from your completed survey.

APPENDIX E

DRAFTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Non-Dance Educator Follow-Up Interview

1. *To be asked only if participant answered "Yes" to question eight- "Have you ever studied dance?"):* In your survey, you stated that you studied dance previously. Could you describe that experience for me?

2. In your survey, you noted that you believe the following skills could be strengthened through regular dance training: (selected skills from question 11 will be inserted here). How do you think these skills are strengthened through participation in dance? In other words, what do you think the acquisition of each of these skills looks like in the dance classroom?

3. You listed _____, _____, and _____ as being the three most important skills in terms of ensuring overall student success. Why did you rank these skills as being most important?

4. What factors do you consider or believe should be considered when mapping out course offerings for your school?

5. Many schools offer music and drama programs, but very few schools offer regular dance classes. Why do you think this is?

6. What barriers do you feel exist when it comes to adding dance as a course offering within the public-school system? Alternatively, what objections would you have to adding dance classes to your school, if your school does not currently offer dance?

6. How do you think adding dance to your school's offerings has changed/would change the overall climate of your school? How might adding dance to your school's course offerings change your line of work?

7. What is one thing that would need to be done or shown in order to make you believe that access to dance education is essential for students?

8. Do you have any final comments or feedback you would like to share in regards to any of the survey or interview questions?

Dance Educator Follow-Up Interview

1. In your survey, you noted that you believe the following skills could be strengthened through regular dance training: (selected skills from question 11 will be inserted here). How do you think these skills are strengthened through participation in dance? In other words, what do you think the acquisition of each of these skills looks like in the dance classroom?

2. You listed _____, _____, and _____ as being the three most important skills in terms of ensuring overall student success. Why did you rank these skills as being most important?

3. Do you feel that your students learn and strengthen these skills through their work in your class? Please explain your answer in detail.

4. What factors do you consider or believe should be considered when mapping out course offerings for your school?

5. Many schools offer music and drama programs, but very few schools offer regular dance classes. Why do you think this is?

6. What barriers do you feel exist when it comes to adding dance as a course offering within the public-school system? Alternatively, what obstacles have you found you faced when it comes to advocating for dance education within your school?

7. How do you think adding dance to your school's offerings has changed the overall climate of your school?

8. What is one thing you wish other educators or school district administrators knew about dance education and its benefits to students?

9. Do you have any final comments or feedback you would like to share in regards to any of the survey or interview questions?